Practical Discourses

Upon Several

Divine Subjects.

Viz.

Of Religious Discourse in Common Conversation.
Of the Fear of Death.
Concerning the Extent of Christ's Satisfaction.
Concerning Practical Atheism.
Of Walking by Faith.
Concerning Charity to the Poor.
Concerning the Right Use of the World.
Concerning the Successive Vanity of Human Life.

An Admonition Concerning Two Late Books, called, *A Discourse of the Love of God.*

VOL. IV.

Written
By JOHN NORRIS, M. A. Rector of *Bemerton* near *Sarum.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

To my very Worthy and much Honour'd Friends,

Mrs. *Eliz. Cabel*,

AND

Mrs. *Mary Prowse*.

GIve me Leave, Good Ladies, to adorn a Book, (that does not indeed deserve the Honour of such a Patronage) with the Inscription of those Recommending Names, which near Relation and a very Excelling Worth have Combined to indear to me. I have been hitherto paying my Addresses abroad, and now, like one that has been Travelling some while in Foreign Parts, find an Inclination to make a Visit nearer Home, but I do not direct these Papers to you so much for your Improvement either in Knowledge, or in Life and Practice, as to satisfie my own Obligations, and to discharge a Debt of Honour and Gratitude. Nor indeed can I hope to make you much Wiser, or much Better by any thing that is here offer'd.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Your eminent and exemplary Practice of your Duty shews that you well understand it, and all that have the Happiness of your Acquaintance Know that you Live *every day better Sermons than I can* Preach. *And I heartily wish we had more such bright Examples of Piety, and living Systems of Morality to give Light and Warmth to a Benighted and Frozen Age, and that the rest of the World were but as well inlightned as that* Sphere *is wherein you move. But you would much rather your Light should shine out from you, than be return'd back to you. I must not therefore* Commend *you, any more than I need* Instruct *you. I pretend indeed to do neither, but only send these Papers by way of Respect and Civility to wait on you; and if you please to receive them, or shall think them worthy to make any part of the Furniture of your Closets, or of the Entertainment of your vacant Hours, the Honour will be equal to the Ambition, and beyond the Deserts of,*

Ladies,

Your Most Affectionate Kinsman, and Most Obliged and Humble Servant,

J. Norris.

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

BEing Willing to be as Serviceable to the Publick as the Measure of my Understanding, Health, Leisure and other Opportunities and Advantages will allow, I continue to Communicate to the World some more of such Practical Discourses as I have Composed upon particular Occasions, and with more than ordinary Care, because I do upon due Consideration verily believe they may (with all their Defects) be in some measure useful, and do good to those who shall Considerately and with Christian Candour peruse them. And if they have that effect, whatever they may be thought of in other respects, I shall not lose my *Aim*, any more than my Reader his *Labour*; for the Success of which I would have him give to God (not to me) the Glory. For I know of none that is due to me, or any other Creature, nor would I therefore assume or pretend to any, but desire to be Content that He in whose Divine Light I see, by whose Grace I am what I am, and by whose Power and Might I do what

I do, ſhould have All. This I take to be the great Rule which all Writers ſhould propoſe to themſelves, and which accordingly I deſire to propoſe in all that I Write: Nor would I own any thing for Mine wherein I either have, or Might be juſtly Suppoſed to have tranſgreſſed it.

I Know not Whether I have met with any thing that has ſtruck me more Senſibly, or made a quicker Impreſſion upon my Spirit than a certain Reflexion which the *Port R.* has upon Our Saviour's Writing upon the Ground, when the Woman taken in Adultery was Accuſed before him. *Jeſus Chriſt* (ſays the Evangelical Moraliſt) 1. *Never wrote but once in his Life.* 2. *And then too but upon the Duſt.* 3. *And only to Evade the Condemning of a Sinner.* 4. *And he would not have what he had Writ to be Known. Thereby inſtructing us not to Write but out of Neceſſity, or for Profit, but with Humility, and Modeſty, and Charity. Jeſus writ his Divine Thoughts upon the Duſt, and we would have Ours ſhould be Written upon Cedar, and Graven upon Braſs. 'Tis indeed moſt Certain that the Spirit of Chriſt is a Spirit of Humility,* and I do not Know whether next to the amazing inſtance of his Incarnation and Humiliation upon the Croſs, he has given a greater Example of it than in not *Writing.* That one who was perſonally united to the Eternal, and Subſtantial *Word* and *Wiſdom* of God, and had the

Abregè de la Morale de L'Evangile. Tom. 2. p. 589.

the Communications of his Divine Spirit without Measure, that Knew so much of the Intellectual World, and could have reveal'd so many Sublime Truths if he had pleas'd, and that without the Labour and Fatigue of Study or Thinking, with as much Ease and Dispatch as 'twas once Say'd, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*; That a Person of such Eminence and Ability should be Content Privately to enjoy the Shine of so Glorious a Day-Spring from on High, and Keep his great and profound Thoughts to himself, without Making any Show or Discovery of his Divine Gifts any further than was absolutely requisite to the Discharge of his Mission, and the Necessary Instruction of the World, and even here too should take the most Natural and unaffected Method, delivering his *Doctrine* as he did his *Miracles* Occasionally and *en Passant*, dropping his Divine Sentences by word of Mouth among those with whom he happen'd to Converse, without the Solemnity of Writing, or the Formality of Set Compositures: I say, the Consideration of this strange *Reserve*, tho' it does not absolutely Condemn Writing Books, yet I think will not have its due Use if not improv'd as a Caution to all Christian Writers how they write for Fame and not for Conscience, and regard any other end but the Glory of God, and the Edification of their Brethren.

As for the latter of these Ends I think there was never more need of Consulting it than now.

now. Not so much for the Improvement of Mens Understandings (which indeed in this Age are arrived to a wonderful Fineness and Justness of thinking) as for the Direction of their Wills and Affections, and the Regulation of Common Life and Practice, which indeed is now Sunk as low, as the other is rais'd and exalted. The State of *Religion* and the State of *Learning* seem to stand at present like the two Poles of the Earth, one *Elevated* and the other *Depressed*. The Truth is (tho' it be a sad one) Fineness and Irreligion make the Character of this Age, which has no Heat with its Light; but while it shines bright and radient, feels Cold and Frozen, and with all the gay Appearances of Life, has the Chillness of Death upon it. *Thou hast a Name that thou livest, and art Dead, Rev.* 3. 1. Which plainly Shews that the latter Days are come upon us, whereof there is this double Character, that *Knowledge* shall *increase*, but the *Love* of many shall *wax Cold*.

Religion indeed is now become little more than Theory, Contention, Profession, and Form. Learned Men Study it, those that would be Infidels dispute and cavil about it, Civil Men profess it, Politic Men and Hypocrites make a great Shew and Ostentation of it, but who is it that Sincerely and Conscientiously practises it and lives by its Measures. For besides that the Fundamental Suppositions of all Religion have been of late very much undermin'd by the loose Principles of *Deism* and *Libertinism*, Men are

generally

generally grown (even those who are Sound enough in those Fundamental Suppositions) into a Strange Carelesness, and Sottish Indifferency about their *Salvation*; and though they pretend to believe another World, seem yet wholely unconcerned how they shall speed in it. In so much that I Know not whether there be any thing in the whole World that is Neglected so much. However I think this I may safely and freely say, after a Writer of no ordinary Genius and Observation, that *should a Christian be in his other Affair as he is in relation to his Salvation, the World would not indure him, he would pass for a very Fool.* So gross is the Carelesness of Men in this grand Point, but the unhappiness of it is that (as the same Acute Author observes) all that which is blamed in other Matters, is excused in the matter of Religion, and that 'tis only in the Affair of Salvation that Men have a Toleration for their Imprudencies, and may with the World's good leave be Fools.

Pensees & Reflexions sur les egarements des Hommes, dans lay voye du Salut. Tom 1. p. 126.

The great Difference among Christians lies in the diversity of their *Opinions*, their Lives (for ought I see) are much at one rate, let their Principles be what they will. Those that hold the Truth of Religion, live generally as they would do in the Contrary *Hypothesis*, and those that hold Religion in its Truth and Purity live however according to the Measures of Errour and Heresy: In this unhappy

py Point the moſt different Parties meet, and whatever their *Faith* may be, their *Lives* for the moſt part are not Chriſtian, nor ſuch as will in the End bring them to Happineſs; unleſs the way thither be much Wider than our Saviour aſſures us it is. Nay, if there be any Truth in that Religion which they profeſs they cannot expect after ſuch Lives any better Portion than a Miſerable Eternity, and yet (which is a ſtrange thing) Happineſs, and that Eternal, is the thing that they propoſe to themſelves all this while, as the great end of their Hopes, and aim of their Endeavours; and if any one that met them upon the *Road* of *Life* ſhould ask them whether they were *travelling*, they would ſay without doubt, for *Heaven*. But can they think that the Common way of Living will ever bring them thither? Strange Folly and Preſumption after a few Days ſo indifferently at leaſt, if not ill Spent upon Earth, to hope hereafter for Heaven! I Know not which is the greater Sottiſhneſs in Men to take ſo little Care for their Salvation, or to think that that little will do.

But how ſhall we awaken Men from this dead Sleep, bring them to themſelves, and recover them into their Senſes? Nothing I Confeſs ſo hard as to reclaim a Vitious and *Knowing* Age. Immorality that proceeds from Ignorance and Darkneſs may like night-walking Shades be Chaſed away by the Light, but who ſhall pull a Mote out of the Eye of the Sun, and if the

Light

Light that is in us be Darkneſs, how great, I had almoſt ſay'd how incurable, is that Darkneſs. Frail *Man* whoſe Firſt thoughts are ſo ſhort and confuſed has room and indulgence for Second, but full Light ſeems to exclude Repentance, and no ſooner does an *Angel* Sin but he becomes a Devil. How then can we hope to reform ſuch a Knowing and Rational Age by Reaſon and Diſcourſe! And yet I Conſider again that ſince all ſin is founded in Errour and Wrong Reaſoning of one ſort or other, and implies at leaſt Actual, if not Habitual Ignorance, the Application is ſtill to be made to Men's Reaſon and Underſtanding (as the part primely affected) if not to inform them what they Know not, yet at leaſt to ingage their Reflexion and Conſideration upon what they Know. And this I take to be the great End both of our *Preaching* and of our *Writing*, and if any well diſpoſed Chriſtian ſhall to this purpoſe receive any Advantage from theſe, or any other of my Diſcourſes, I hope he will remember me in his Prayers, and God in his Praiſes and Thanksgivings.

J. N.

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Of

Of Religious Diſcourſe in Common Converſation.

In Three Parts.

PSAL. xxxvij. 30.

The Mouth of the Righteous ſpeaketh Wiſdom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgment.

THIS it ſeems was the Character of a Good Man in King *David*'s time; he was known by his good Diſcourſe; and if it be not ſo now, 'tis either becauſe Mens Thoughts are not ſo good as they were then, or becauſe we are mightily gone off from the Plainneſs and Simplicity of that Age, and are not ſo much diſpoſed to ſpeak what we think. However it be, it may ſeem at firſt ſomewhat ſtrange that when Religion was more in the *Hearts* of Men, at a further diſtance from the Tongue, it ſhould hold ſuch a ſtrict Correſpondence with it, and now 'tis got into the *Head*, and ſo more within its Neighbourhood, it ſhould be yet ſuch a ſtranger to it. But when I think again my Wonder ceaſes. For though the Tongue has its *dwelling* in the *Head*, it has its *Motion* from the *Heart*. And ſo our Saviour tells us, *Mat.* 12. 34. that *out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh.* But we no where

read that out of the Abundance of the *Head* the Mouth ſpeaketh. Nor do we find it ſo by Experience, but rather the Contrary, Silence being the common Effect of much Knowledge. Let a Man's Head be never ſo full, and it may continue ſo without Aking, but if his Heart be full it muſt Diſcharge it ſelf or break. Thus 'tis not only obſerv'd, but even complain'd of Studious and Contemplative Men, that though their Heads be never ſo plentifully furniſhed with what they read and think, they can yet forbear talking of it, and commonly do ſo, thoſe of them that think and know moſt, being remarkable for ſpeaking leaſt, which makes their Converſation ſo inſignificant and unedifying, as generally it is. But 'tis not ſo with *Lovers*, nor yet with the Men of the World. They are not ſo reſerv'd and lock'd up, but will be continually talking of their ſeveral *Miſtreſſes*, and fancy the Subject as acceptable to others as it is to themſelves, ſo that you may quickly know what they are, and which is their dominant and governing Paſſion by their Diſcourſe. All Love is Talkative, and though the Head can be ſo contentedly Silent, the Heart cannot. When that is full of any thing, even the Dumb cannot forbear ſpeaking, and the Paſſion that looſens their Tongues will alſo make them Eloquent. And becauſe good Men have their Hearts and Minds as much ſet upon Goodneſs, as the Men of the World have theirs upon Worldly and Carnal Objects, ſince the Love of God and of Vertue is their great Paſſion, and Religion the Weight and Bias of their Souls, hence 'tis that the Vein of their Diſcourſe runs altogether upon that ſtrain, and while Vanity and Folly, Sin and Impertinence are the beaten

Subjects

Subjects of Ordinary Converſation, *The Mouth of the Righteous ſpeaketh Wiſdom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgment.*

I need not beſtow any Critical Nicity upon the Words *Wiſdom* and *Judgment*, ſo frequently uſed in Scripture, which takes no notice by way of Commendation of any Wiſdom but what ſerves to the Government of a Man's Life, and the Salvation of his Soul, and which commonly uſes Judgment for Juſtice and Equity, as alſo more at large for the Rules and Precepts of Morality and Good Life in General. And that it ſignifies ſo here, ſufficiently appears from the following part of this Character of a Good Man in the next Verſe, *The Law of his God is in his Heart.* From which put together, the intent of the Pſalmiſt ſeems to be to Characterize a good Man by this Property, that he is one that is wont upon all occaſions to ſeaſon even his Ordinary Converſation with good wholeſome Diſcourſe, ſome Pious and Religious Matter or other, that may ſerve to inlighten and edify thoſe that hear him, and make them the Wiſer and the Better for his Company.

The Subject then that I am led to treat of upon the Occaſion of theſe Words, is, *Of Religious Diſcourſe in Ordinary Converſation:* For the fuller and more diſtinct Conſideration of which my preſent Undertaking ſhall be,

Firſt, To Inquire into the Reaſons, why Diſcourſe about Religion is ſo much diſuſed, even by Good Men, in Common Converſation.

Secondly, To ſhew the Inſufficiency of thoſe Reaſons, and that to ſeaſon his Diſcourſe with the things of Religion is one real part of the Duty of Man.

Thirdly, To shew that those who are very good indeed, and have a due thorough Sense of Religion, will have regard to this Practice, and at least in some considerable Measure, exercise themselves in it. So making good the Character given of them by the Psalmist, *The Mouth of the Righteous speaketh Wisdom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgment.*

Part I. And First for the Reasons of the Disuse of Religion in Discourse. And here in the First place I take it for granted that I am not going to account for an Imaginary Defect, or Neglect in *Idea* only, but that the Case supposed is Real, that to talk of Religion is indeed very much disused and out of Fashion, and that among People of laudable Character, and otherwise good and vertuous. Not that the Articles, Points, Questions and Controversies of Religion are so pass'd over in silence, No, there was always Noise and Clamour enough about them, and never more than now, though there be but little Truth gain'd, and a great deal of Charity lost in the Contention. But 'tis not the Notional, but the Practical part of Religion whose disuse in Conversation I complain of. Men do indeed talk of Religion, but not of that which is Practical, nor in a Practical way, that is I mean after such a serious and devotional Manner as to put one another in remembrance of the great Concernments of a good Life and of that two-fold Eternity which depends upon it, and to stir one another up to the Works of Piety and Charity, and the Exercise of such Christian Graces as are necessary both to carry them to Heaven, and to qualify them for the Enjoyment of it. Do Men talk

talk thus of Religion? No, Wicked Men cannot, and Good Men (unleſs they be very good indeed, whoſe Number, God knows, a few Figures will ſerve to caſt up) for ſome certain Reaſons too often decline it. So that between them both, what through the Indiſpoſition of the One and the Incapacity of the Other, a Man may make Viſit after Viſit, go from Houſe to Houſe, out of one Company into another, for it may be a Twelvemonth together, and never hear one word of Religion paſs, unleſs it be (as was hinted before) by way of Wrangle and Diſpute, and that indeed unleſs he ſtop his Ears, he can hardly avoid, if he can then. But as for any ſerious and edifying Diſcourſe about it, whither ſhall a Man go, unleſs it be to *Church*, to hear any ſuch thing? All the Diſcourſe of the World runs upon the things of the World, ſuch as News, Trade, Buſineſs, Learning, not to ſay any thing of leſſer and meaner Subjects that imploy Goſſiping and Cenſorious Tongues. And theſe things make the great Buz and Hum of the City. But as for Religion there is in all this hurry ſuch an univerſal Huſh and Silence about it, that were it not for our Books of Devotion and our Churches, (thoſe two Providential Monuments and Preſervatives of declining Piety) a Stranger would hardly know whether there were any Religion among us. Sure I am it would be a great while before he would find it by our Diſcourſe; and were he to pick it out by that, for ought I know he might learn our Language much ſooner. It looks in my Mind as if Religion had a kind of *Imbargo* laid upon it, and Men were under a Prohibition to talk of it, and to forfeit ſome Penalty to the Government if they did. Were this the

Case, I am Confident they could not be more Silent concerning it than they are, and considering the bent of our Inclination to what is forbid, I question whether they would be so much!

And yet Men profess Religion all this while, express a decent regard towards it, and pretend to believe the weighty Doctrines of it, the Being of God, the Resurrection of the Body, the Immortality of the Soul, and the two great Eternities. And is it not strange then that they should never talk of these things? Should but any two of these Men Travel together upon the Road, especially if to a place of considerable Note, and which they were never at before, and where they were ever after to dwell, how often would they talk of it before they got to it! Now is not this exactly our Case? We are all Travellers, and our Life is but a Journey, and we are bound not for a little Town or City, but for another World, to which we are perfect Strangers at present, and in which we are to take up our happy or miserable abode for ever. And is it not then very strange that Men should Travel on together day after day for many Years following, upon a Journey of such Consequence as this, and never entertain themselves upon the Road with what all other Travellers do, discourse about their Journeys End, and the right way that leads to it. That a thing that is so much every Body's Concern, should be almost no Body's Discourse. Is not this a Wonder? yes it is, the very greatest that I know of in the World. But then this makes it the more necessary to consider the Reasons of so strange a Conduct.

And here I think in the Firſt place 'tis very plain and obvious why Wicked Men talk no more of Religion, even becauſe they have none to talk of. The reaſon why there is ſo little of it in their Mouths, is becauſe there is leſs of it in their Hearts. When there are ſo many other Subjects that are more agreeable to their Taſtes, they have no Heart to talk of a thing they have neither Notion nor Reliſh of themſelves, and which would but lull their jolly Company aſleep. And truly 'tis no great matter whether they do or no, ſince they muſt needs do it with a very ill Grace, and to very little purpoſe. Religion has no advantage from the Commendations of thoſe whoſe Lives are a conſtant Satyr upon it, and they do it diſhonour enough by their bare Profeſſion of it, and therefore need not add to that the further diſgrace of their Diſcourſe. And unleſs they owe it a Spite, and have a mind either to Affront that or their Company, ſure they will not. For certainly the Religious Diſcourſe of him cannot be very decent to Men, whoſe *Religion* it ſelf, whoſe very *Prayer* is an Abomination to God, and if a Parable, as *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* 26. 7. be not comely in the Mouth of a Fool, much leſs is Religion in the Mouth of an ill Man. But I think we may excuſe them here, it being a fault they are very rarely guilty of, unleſs it be upon two particular Occaſions, when they are either *Drunk* or about to *Dye*, and then indeed you ſhall have ſome of them very Devoutly given, and much for talking of Religion, but at other times they ſtudiouſly baulk and decline it as too flat a Subject for their gay Spirits.

But 'tis not worth while to conſider any longer what theſe Men do, or upon what Grounds and

Motives they act. It is of more Conſequence to inquire into the Grounds and Reaſons of the great diſuſe of Religious Diſcourſe among Good Men. And here though I doubt not but that this is in great Meaſure to be aſcribed to want of Goodneſs too as well as in the other ſort, or which is all one to the imperfection of it, ſince, as will be made appear under the Third Part, thoſe who have a due Senſe of Religion, and a thorough Zeal for it, will ſhew it by their Diſcourſe, yet becauſe the Men I am now ſpeaking of, though not the very Beſt, are yet ſuppoſed to be Good, and ſo muſt have a true Love and value for Religion, and conſequently muſt be ſuppoſed willing enough of themſelves to talk of it, were there not ſome Diſcouragements from without that did hinder them from ſo doing, I think it more Material at preſent to Conſider what thoſe unhappy Diſcouragements are. The moſt ordinary and moſt prevailing of which I take to be theſe Three.

1. *The Contempt that is generally caſt upon Good Men.*
2. *The Fear of being thought Hypocrites.*
3. *Shame of being out of the Mode or Faſhion.*

1. *The Contempt that is generally caſt upon Good Men.* Not that I think an ill Man can poſſibly deſpiſe a good Man in his Heart. No, he has a ſecret Eſteem and Veneration for him there, and as he would willingly dye the Death, ſo he inwardly Honours the Life of the Righteous. But yet for all this Wicked Men have ſtill ſo much of their Father the Devil in them, that they are loath to be unhappy alone, and take a Solitary Journey to Hell, and

and are therefore for ſecuring as much Company thither beforehand as they can. And in order to this they endeavour to fix a Mark of Ignominy and Diſgrace upon Religion, and treat thoſe that openly profeſs and practice it with Scorn and Contempt, thinking by their ridiculing Scoffs and Flouts either to Laugh them out of it, or at leaſt to Diſcourage them from ſuch an open Acknowledgment, and viſible expreſſion of it as ſhall do them or their Helliſh Cauſe any hurt. Their Plot is againſt the very Being and Life of Religion, and if by this means they cannot extinguiſh its Vital Heat, yet they hope at leaſt to ſtifle its Light, and hinder it from *Shining*. So that if Men will be good and vertuous they ſhall be ſo to themſelves, and make no ſhew of their Piety to ſhame and upbraid thoſe that have none, or to confirm thoſe that have. This is their Deviliſh Policy, and with the Devil's help they too often ſucceed in it, having beſides that Advantage a very ſtrong Paſſion in Human Nature on their ſide. For there is nothing that Men more naturally love than Eſteem, and nothing that they more naturally hate, and can leſs bear than Contempt. And ſince this Contempt is thus maliciouſly intail'd upon Goodneſs, this makes Good Men backward to Diſcourſe of Religion for fear they ſhould meet with it, and ſo with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 39. they hold their Mouth as it were with a Bridle, while the ungodly are in their ſight, and keep ſilence, yea, even from good Words, though it be Pain and Grief to them. For 'tis againſt the natural Grain and Diſpoſition of their Minds, but they are afraid to appear what they are becauſe of the Contempt that is annex'd to their Character, and therefore they chuſe (though

with

with inward reluctance) to hide their Goodness, and wear a Disguise over it, as some whose Profession obliges them to another sort of Habit, are said to travel sometimes in grey coats for fear of meeting with Affronts upon the Road. Why this is the very case of Good Men in the World. They dare not appear in their true colours. But then by the way, is not the World come to a fine pass think ye, when Religion has so few Friends in it, that the Servants of Jesus Christ are afraid to wear their Master's Livery, lest it should expose them to Affronts? But I forbear, and go on to the next Discouragement, which is,

2. *The Fear of being thought Hypocrites.* Hypocrisy is so odious a Vice that even the very Suspicion of it is intolerable, and the Better any Man is the more uneasy and insupportable it must be to him. As there can be nothing so fundamentally contrary to the Nature and Character of a good Man, so there is nothing so deeply resented, or justly dreaded by him, to whom it must be a far less Affliction to be thought altogether without Religion, than to be thought a Pretender to it when he has none. Now here's another Artifice of Wicked Men against the Good and Pious. If they fail in their first Design, and cannot directly Ridicule them out of their Religion, nor render them ridiculous for it, then they turn the Tables, and cry them down for *Hypocrites* and Dissemblers, and then they reckon they undermine the beautiful Fabrick of their Vertues at one blow, and make them contemptible and odious all at once. And because this is so effectual an Engin, you shall often find them at work with it. When they see a Man carry any extraordinary Appearances, or express

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any uncommon Symptoms of Religion (and as the World goes, ordinary ones are now become such) either in his Actions, or in his Deportment, or in his Discourse, the next word is, *I'll warrant you he is a Hypocrite*, and then they reckon they have done his work, and their own too. Now though this be a most extravagant and unconscionable way of censuring, to set Men down for Hypocrites because they wear about them the Marks and Characters of Religion, yet I must needs confess that a certain sort of Men in the World have unhappily contributed too much Occasion to it, and Pretence for it, partly by their talking of Religion after such a Canting, Whining, Awkward and Fantastical Manner, so as to betray the want of it at the same time; and partly by acting against it while in their Discourse they seem'd so passionately zealous and concern'd for it, by being found wanting in the great Duties of Morality, and particularly to make bold with the Precepts of the *Second Table*, while they overflow'd with Religious Sentences, dropt Scripture as they went, and had nothing but *God*, *Christ*, and *Heaven* in their Mouths. This Awkward and Nauseous way of talking of Religion was enough of it self to make men sick of it. But then the gross Immorality that usually went along with it, did so further prejudice and possess them against it, that whenever they heard Men begin any Discourse about Religion, they thought presently there was some Dishonesty a hatching, and that 'twas time to look to their Pockets. By this Means good Communication was brought into discredit, the Palate of the World was disgusted at it, some were jealous of it, others afraid of it, and all conceiv'd a Prejudice and an

Aversion

Averſion againſt it, ſo that the Holy Things of Religion fell at length into Contempt and Diſrepute, nay, became an Abomination and an Offence, inſomuch that (as 'tis ſaid upon the Occaſion of the Miſcarriages of *Eli*'s Sons) *Men abhorr'd the Offerings of the Lord*, 1 Sam. 2. 17. And as the Text moreover ſays, that the Sin of the young Men was great, ſo I doubt not but that the Men I ſpeak of have a great deal to anſwer for the Prejudice they have done to the Intereſt of Religion, the general diſreliſh and diſtaſte they have rais'd in Mens minds againſt it, the ſcandal they have laid in the way of good Men, and the Advantage they have given to the bad, who have not fail'd to make the utmoſt uſe and improvement of it. For I cannot but look upon this as the chief Cauſe of the great Diſuſe of Religious Diſcourſe, of which even good Men are grown ſhy, aſham'd, nay even afraid, leſt they ſhould be thought guilty of that Hypocriſy which ſome of our late Pretenders were ſo notorious, and ſo infamous for. The ſhort is, Men were got into a very odd and untoward way of talking of Religion, and ſome of the greateſt Talkers of it were withal obſerv'd to be ſome of the greateſt Knaves, and to make uſe of their Sanctify'd Diſcourſe only as a Diſguiſe to Palliate, and as an Inſtrument to Execute their Knavery, and this made honeſt and well-meaning Men avoid it, for fear they ſhould be taken for Knaves and Hypocrites too. And the ſame Conſideration has too great an Influence upon them ſtill, and 'tis a Prejudice they cannot yet get over. But there is another conſiderable Objection behind, and that is,

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3. *The Shame of being out of the Mode and Faſhion of the World.* This Reaſon I put laſt, becauſe it ſuppoſes Religious Diſcourſe to be already in diſuſe for the ſake of the two former, and does not firſt make it ſo, but only adds more Weight to the already prevailing Scale. The Contempt that lies upon Good Men, and the Fear of being taken for Hypocrites firſt jointly conſpire to bring Religious Diſcourſe out of Faſhion; and when it is ſo, then the ſhame of being out of that Faſhion contributes to the further forbearance and diſuſe of it. The Mode and Cuſtom of the World is one of the moſt ingaging and bewitching things in it; one of the firſt that Fools learn, and one of the laſt that Wiſe Men can find the Courage to deſpiſe. 'Tis ſo in all things, but in nothing ſo much as in Diſcourſe, whoſe conformity to Cuſtom is reckon'd its greateſt Elegance and Commendation, as well in the Choice of the Subject as in the uſe of Words and Phraſes. Men uſually talk, not only according to the Tone and Dialect of their ſeveral Countries, but upon thoſe Subjects too that are moſt faſhionable and creditable there. For you muſt know that there are certain Modiſh Subjects as well as Modiſh Expreſſions and ways of Talking, and thoſe different according to the diverſity of Ages, Places, and Perſons. The Courtiers Subject is Love and Gallantry, the Gentleman talks of his Country-Sports and Recreations, the Trades-man of Buſineſs and Six to the Hundred, the Scholar a little indeed more to the purpoſe of Books and Learning; but none of theſe talk of *Religion*; that's a ſtale, out-dated, antiquated, ſuperannuated Subject, too dull and melancholy for the Gaiety of this ſpruce and more accompliſh'd

accompliſh'd Age, and a Man were as good be ſeen in an Antick Dreſs, or with a Ruff about his Neck, as to have it in his Mouth. And accordingly thoſe that have it in their Hearts are apt to be very wary and cautious how they let it appear *there*. They ſee that the Humour of the World runs againſt them, that there are ſo many more pleaſing and agreeable Subjects to talk of, that Religion can find no place, and is in a manner ſhut out of all Converſation, that the Great and the Wiſe, the Well-bred and the Learned, and even the Good too, very gravely paſs it over, and they are loth to be ſingular, and know not how indeed to begin an unwelcom Diſcourſe upon an unmodiſh Subject, and which, if they ſhould, no body would ſecond them in, or thank them for; or perhaps ſo much as give them a patient Hearing; and ſo partly out of caution and prudent regard to themſelves, and partly out of good Breeding and Reſpect to their Company, they very mannerly and civilly let it alone. And by this means it comes to paſs that other Channels are cut out for our Diſcourſe, which runs upon all the Subjects in the World beſides, whether great or little, good or bad, ſo that nothing can eſcape the reach and compaſs of our Talk, while in the mean time Religion, which is the Glory of our Natures, the End of our Beings, the Nobleſt Object of our Thoughts, the greateſt Concernment of our Lives, and the beſt Imployment of our Tongues, is yet confined to the Cloſet, and dares not appear abroad, or breathe in the open Air, but like a Lamp in an Urn is forced to burn under Ground, and to ſhine within its little Subterraneous incloſure, where none can ſee or enjoy its Light. The World in ſhort is

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come to this, that that Freedom, Openneſs and Ingenuity that belongs to Religion and Vertue, is uſurp'd by Vice and Wickedneſs, and that Guilt, Shame and Reſervedneſs, which is proper and due only to Vice, is by a ſtrange Combination and Agreement impoſed upon Religion; ſo that as excellent a thing as it is, even thoſe that have it are aſhamed to own it, but every Man keeps it as a *Fairy-Treaſure* to himſelf, as if he were to loſe either *that* or his *Credit* by the Diſcovery. And thus have I laid before you the Principal Reaſons of the great diſuſe of Religion in our Common Diſcourſe. And leſt they ſhould be thought to juſtify that unhappy Effect which they ſo ordinarily produce, I come now in the next place,

Secondly, To ſhew the Inſufficiency of theſe Reaſons, and that to ſeaſon his Diſcourſe with the things of Religion is one real part of the Duty of Man. Part. II. And firſt as to the *Contempt* that ſo uſually waits upon Goodneſs, what is there in it that ſhould ſo much as move a Perſon of Senſe and Diſcretion (which I ſuppoſe every Good Man in ſome meaſure to be) when he conſiders that 'tis only *Contempt*, that is, only an Opinion, which being a Thought of the Mind may indeed expreſs it ſelf in Words, Looks, and Supercilious Behaviour, but can neither wound the Fleſh, nor break the Bones, nor make the Object of it any further unhappy than he pleaſes. For when all's done, 'tis not another's Thought concerning a Man, but his own that muſt afflict him, and make him uneaſy, and if he can but maſter his own Reflection, he may at once defy and deſpiſe the others Opinion. As he may eaſily do if he

he conſider further that 'tis not only mere Contempt, but the Contempt of an ill Man, who for the ſame reaſon to be ſure is ſo ill a Judge that his good Character would be the trueſt Scandal, and if he thought never ſo Honourably of a deſerving Perſon, it would be that Perſon's Intereſt to bribe him to keep his Opinion to himſelf. But then again, 'tis not only bare Contempt, and that of an ill Man, but an ill Man's Contempt of one that is good, and therefore Worthy of the higheſt Honour and Eſteem, and that for doing what belongs to him as ſuch, for acting according to his excellent Nature and Character. 'Tis as if one ſhould deſpiſe *Light* for *Shining*. And can there be any thing more contemptible, as well as abſurd, than ſuch a Contempt, unleſs it be the Author of it? All this I ſpeak upon Suppoſition that an ill Man could poſſibly deſpiſe one whom he thinks truly good: But what if he cannot? What if all this Contempt (as was remarqu'd before) be nothing but in ſhew and external Treatment, nothing but a forc'd acting of an uncivil part, while at the ſame time he ſecretly Honours and Reverences him within himſelf? What a poor deſpicable thing muſt this empty Shadow of Diſreſpect then appear, how unworthy, I will not ſay of a Good Man's Concern, but even of his very Notice and Conſideration!

Then in the next place as to the Fear of being thought a *Hypocrite*, I will readily allow it to be as bad a Thought as one Man can poſſibly entertain of another (which by the way ſhould make Men tender and cautious how they proceed to ſo ſevere a Cenſure) but then 'tis no more than a *Thought*, and that commonly of the more raſh and haſty as well

well as diſaffected Judges, and in the preſent Caſe a very unjuſt one, there being no rational ground why any Man ſhould be thought guilty of Hypocriſy for talking Religiouſly, unleſs he betray it himſelf, either by the Affected and Fantaſtick manner of his Diſcourſe, or by the viſible Demonſtration of a contrary Life. Religious talking abſolutely conſider'd and in it ſelf, is no Natural ſign of Hypocriſie, but of the contrary, for who ſhould talk of Religion but thoſe that have a deep Senſe of it, and are animated with its Power and Spirit? There is, I know, a way of Talking, or rather, *Prating* of Religion, which may juſtly expoſe a Man to that Suſpicion, but truly if a Man Diſcourſe of it ſeriouſly, gravely, ſoberly and unaffectedly, and does not appear to bely his Diſcourſe by his Practice, whatever Wicked and Envious Men may out of Malice or Policy give out, I can hardly believe that they who call him Hypocrite with their Mouths, do in their Hearts really think him ſo. But whether they do or no, what great matter is it, and what need a Good Man be ſo much concern'd to be thought or cenſur'd as a Hypocrite by a Company of Fallible Creatures at beſt, and for the moſt part Fools and Sots, when he is Conſcious to himſelf of his own Sincerity, and can with Boldneſs Appeal to the great Infallible Judge for the Truth and Integrity of his Heart.

Then Laſtly, As to the *Shame* of being out of the *Mode* and Faſhion, this one would think ſhould be even to an ordinary Meaſure of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, a very Vincible and Surpaſſable Diſcouragement. For alas what is a Mode or Faſhion, but only a continued and ſetled Practice of a great Many? A Mode implies only Matter of *Fact*, not

of *Reaſon* or *Right*. 'Tis not what a great many ſhould do, but what they do do, and for ſome conſiderable time continue to do. For there are two things that go to the making of a Mode or Faſhion, the Practice of a great Many, and the continuation and ſettlement of that Practice. The Practice of a Few does not make a Faſhion, nor of a great Many if it have not ſome Continuance. But now that a thing be done for a long time, or by a great many (beſides that thoſe *Many*, though the Major, are generally the leaſt conſiderable part of Mankind) is ſo Caſual and Fortuitous a thing, and that depends upon ſo many little Accidents and Contingencies, not to ſay Whimſeys and Caprices, that the World had need be much another thing than it is to deſerve that a Wiſe Man ſhould pay any great deference to any of its Faſhions. Indeed did Men always act conſiderately and upon Principles of Senſe and Reaſon, nay, even according to the beſt of that Underſtanding which they have, the Caſe would be very different, but as they are pleas'd now to order the Matter, that which we call the Faſhion of the World, is little better than the Humour of the World, and what great regard is there due to that? Something indeed there is in it, ſo much, that a Man would not willingly be out of the Mode when he might be as well in it, but would Comply with it as far as he might innocently and reaſonably, and not be Singular for Nothing. But yet after all, a Mode that has no Natural Reaſon or Ground, but only mere Cuſtom and Uſe to Support it, is but a very little thing. And what then is an ill Mode, a Mode that is againſt all Senſe and Reaſon and Religion too, and that tends to the Diſcouragement and Suppreſſion, I may ſay Extinction

tinction of that little Piety that is left among us? And what Reaſon is there that a good Man (one of whoſe principal Characters is, *Not to be Conform'd to the Courſe of the* World) ſhould decline diſcourſing of the only Subjects that's worth talking of, for fear of tranſgreſſing ſuch a Mode? But the Miſchief of it is, Fools begin Faſhions, and Wiſe Men not only Follow, but Authorize them.

And thus you ſee how ſlight and trivial theſe Mighty Objections are when they come to be look'd into, which diſcourage ſo many Good Men from talking of Religion, and withal, by the way, what little things will hinder us from doing that which is Good. But ſuppoſe they were never ſo conſiderable otherwiſe and in themſelves, yet what are they, and how little ought they to be regarded, when they come in Competition with a Man's *Duty*! I ſay a Man's *Duty*, for ſo I call it, and ſhall now prove it to be from the Three great Heads of the Duty of every Man, that to Himſelf, that to his Neighbour, and that to God.

And Firſt 'tis a Duty that every Man owes to *Himſelf*. The great and general Duty that every Man owes to himſelf is to Conſult the Perfection of his Rational Nature, and to provide for the Eternal Happineſs of his Soul. And the next to that is to uſe all thoſe Means which directly lead to that End, and have a near Connexion with it. Now as a Holy and Religious Frame and Temper of Mind is the neareſt and moſt immediate Means to that, ſo there is nothing that does more Naturally conduce to cheriſh and keep up in a Man a Warm and Vital Senſe of Religion, than frequently to talk of it. Meditation upon good things is in-

deed of excellent uſe to this purpoſe, and accordingly the Pſalmiſt makes it one Part of the Good Man's Character, *Pſal.* 1. that he *Meditates in the Law of God day and night.* And ſo in the Verſe after the Text it is ſaid of him, that *the Law of his God is in his Heart.* But yet however, Religious Thoughts when they are confined to the Mind, and tranſacted only in the Scene of the Imagination, have not half that Influence upon the Man, as when they are cloath'd with Words, and are audibly uttered by the Tongue. Meditation is a great Improvement to a *Scholar*, but yet to Diſcourſe over, and Communicate his Notions to another, ſerves yet further to improve him, and lets in New and More Light into his Thoughts. And ſo 'tis in Religion, to Think and Meditate of it ſilently to ones ſelf, is, no doubt, a very Comfortable and Edifying Practice, but yet when we talk of it to another, it makes a deeper Impreſſion upon us, and we are quite otherwiſe affected with it than when we muſed upon it privately by our ſelves alone. And indeed let a Man retire into his Cloſet never ſo duely, and imploy himſelf there never ſo devoutly in Prayer, Meditation and Communion with God, yet to have no body to talk to of Religion afterwards, when he comes forth, nor to hear it talk'd of, muſt needs be a great damp to him, and if not quite unbend, muſt yet however very much *Slacken* the *Spring* of his Devotion. Which by the way is the great diſadvantage of *Hermits* and Solitary Recluſes. Their Light Shines only through an empty Medium, without meeting with any Body in its way to return it, and ſo wants the Reflection of its own Beams. They may have a good Principle of Spiritual Life in them, but the Heavenly

Heavenly Plant is too much ſtreightned and bound up to thrive, and cannot ſhoot forth its Branches very far (how good ſoever its Root may be) for want of Liberty and Room. But then where's the Difference in this reſpect betwixt living in a Deſart and in the World, ſince Religion is in a manner as little Diſcours'd of in the one as in the other? Why truly the odds is not much, ſave only that what is actually thus in Society, as Men are pleas'd to order it, muſt of neceſſity be ſo in perfect Solitude, and that in the World, as wicked and ill order'd as it is, a Man may poſſibly meet with a Correſpondent in Piety with whom he may Traffique and Negotiate in the Affairs of Heaven, which in a Deſart he cannot, but till he does do ſo his Caſe is the ſame with that of a Hermit, (only in ſome Reſpects a great deal worſe, as liable to the Aſſaults of bad Diſcourſe as well as to the want of Good) and his Religion has the very ſame diſadvantage to contend with. And that truly a very great one. For even Fire it ſelf will languiſh and go out if it want Air, and ſo will Devotion too if it have not vent by good Diſcourſe, which Fans and Ventilates its Holy Fire, and ſerves (even as much as Fuel it ſelf) to nouriſh and keep it alive. And I cannot but reckon the want of this among the chief Cauſes of the great and long lamented Decay of Chriſtian Piety. For Converſation is the very Air and Breath, I had almoſt ſaid the *Lungs*, of Religion, without which it will be in danger of being ſtifled and choak'd up, but with which it will glow, and flame out, and burn bright. And therefore ſince to talk of Religion is an Exercile that tends ſo much to the Advantage of it, every Man certainly owes ſo much at leaſt to himſelf, and

the Care of his own Soul, as frequently to Uſe and Practice it. But further,

Secondly, 'Tis alſo a Duty that every Man owes to his *Neighbour*; whom he is bound to love as himſelf, and whoſe Spiritual Welfare therefore he is to regard and ſet forward as he would do his own. Now he cannot expreſs this his Charitable regard to his Neighbour better, nor promote his Soul's Health and Happineſs more than by uſing Pious and Religious Diſcourſe to him in his Ordinary Converſation with him. For as Evil Communication Corrupts Good Manners, ſo Good Communication will Reform Evil Ones, and make them that are Good better. And ſince Wicked Men, thoſe Emiſſaries of the Devil, are ſo buſie to ſeaſon thoſe they Converſe with, what they can, with the Helliſh Leaven of their Lewd, Prophane, and Immoral Talk, why ſhould not Good Men, if 'twere only to Countermine the others Wickedneſs, think themſelves as much concern'd to diſpoſe Men to Goodneſs by their Pious Diſcourſe? Not that after all they can reaſonably hope to do as much Good by their wholſome, as the others do Miſchief by their poiſonous Breath, becauſe theſe latter row with the Stream, and have the Bias of Corrupt Nature on their ſide. But however a great deal of Good may be done, and if any thing will reform the World, and revive in it the Old Evangelick Spirit of Primitive Piety, it muſt be Good Familiar Diſcourſe. For beſides the many particular good Offices that may be done with it by informing the Ignorant, by awakening thoſe that do not Conſider nor Practice what they know, by quickning the Lukewarm, by Comforting the Afflicted and the like, there is this general Advantage

tage that will further accrue by it to Mankind, People will ſee and be Convinc'd that there is a Senſe of Religion in the World (which truly they are tempted to queſtion when they hear no body talk of it) and that there are ſome in it that in ſpite of all the Diſcouragements of a perverſe and Corrupt Age, dare own and ſtand by the Cauſe of God, do not ſcruple to declare what Maſter they ſerve, by wearing his Livery, are neither aſhamed of what they profeſs, nor afraid of any ill Conſequences of profeſſing it, which muſt needs be a great Comfort, Incouragement and Edification to all that are Witneſſes of ſuch a truly Great and Noble Inſtance of Chriſtian Bravery. And truly as eaſy and as pleaſant as the Paths of Piety and Religion are, a little Company would do well in the way to Heaven, as well as upon other Roads, and there is no Traveller ſo active and full of Spirit, but what would Travel better in Society with others, than all alone by himſelf. *Prov.* 27. 17. *As Iron ſharpneth Iron, ſo a Man ſharpeneth the Countenance of his Friend*, ſays *Solomon*; that is, quickens and enlivens him, and ſets a new Edge both upon his Wit, and upon his Paſſions and Affections. 'Tis ſo in Other things as well as in Religion, but Moſt of all in Religion, the Impreſſions of which nothing will make enter ſo deep, or remain ſo long in the Hearts of Men, as the ſerious and frequent uſe of it in Ordinary Diſcourſe. I ſay *Ordinary* Diſcourſe. For to talk of it upon Solemn Occaſions only, looks too much like a *Formality*, and though good Books and Sermons be of Excellent Uſe, and may here and there do a great deal of Good, yet they are but dead things in compariſon of thoſe *Living Births* of Piety that come from the Mouth

in Converſation, when Hearts truly toucht with the Love of God communicate their Light and Heat, and blow up one anothers dormant Fires into a burning and ſhining Flame. And therefore ſince there is ſo much Edification in Religious Diſcourſe, the great Advantage that accrues to our Neighbour as well as to our ſelves by it, may ſerve as another Argument both to Oblige, and to Perſwade us to the Practice of it. But we are yet further to Conſider,

Thirdly, That 'tis alſo a Duty that every Man owes to *God*, for whoſe Glory he was made, and whoſe Honour and Glory by the great Law and End of his Creation he is to ſeek and advance, and which he cannot better promote than by Religious Diſcourſe, by talking Honourably of God, and ſpeaking Good of his Name, by repreſenting the Excellency of his Being and Nature, the Order and Wiſdom, the Juſtice and Goodneſs of his Government, the Reaſonableneſs and Equity of his Laws, the Pleaſantneſs and perfect Freedom of his Service, the great Inſtances of his Fatherly Love and Kindneſs to us here, and the Glorious Rewards that he has prepared and reſerves for us hereafter, beſides thoſe more direct and immediate Glorifications of God, which conſiſt in Acts of *Praiſe* and *Thankſgiving*, which by themſelves make a good part of Religious Diſcourſe. By theſe we ſhall render God and his ways lovely and amiable in the Eyes of the World, win over Subjects to his Government, ſet up his Kingdom in their Hearts, raiſe Religious Sentiments in the Minds of Men, and ſtir 'em up to the Love, Fear, Worſhip and Adoration of the Great and Good God, and to expreſs their Devotional Affections to him in Conformity

formity to his Will, and in Obedience to his Laws, which after all is the trueſt Honour and Glorification of God, according to that of our Saviour, *Joh.* 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit.* And thus alſo upon the Account of the Duty we owe to God, as well as that we owe to our Neighbour and our Selves, we are Obliged to the Practice of Religious Diſcourſe, which now upon this threefold Ground appears to be a real part of the Duty of Man.

I might further argue the ſame from the Natural End and Uſe of *Speech*, which without doubt was given us for higher and more Material Purpoſes, than to drive Bargains upon the Exchange, or to talk Politicks over a News Letter, or to hold an Impertinent chat in Goſſiping Company about Cloaths and Faſhions, and the little Affairs and Tranſactions of the Neighbourhood. 'Tis remarkable that among all the Creatures of the World, Man is the only one that has Religion, and the only one too that has Speech, and is there not great reaſon to think that one of theſe was Naturally intended in order to the other? And what ſhall a Man talk of, what Subject is there that is Worthy of his Diſcourſe, if not that which is at once his *Perfection*, and his *Diſtinction*.

But this Matter is ſufficiently clear'd from *Reaſon*; all therefore that I ſhall further add in Confirmation of it ſhall be from *Scripture*. To this purpoſe I might alledge that general Exhortation of our Saviour Chriſt, *Mat.* 5. 16. *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven*; which without doubt is as applicable to good Words, as

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to good Works, as being alike Exemplary, and alike tending to Edification. But I shall lay the stress of the Matter upon two or three express Texts that speak more home to the Point, and indeed so home as to decide it. And first I take hold of those plain words of St. *Paul*, *Ephes.* 4. 29. *Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers.* Again, says the Apostle, *Col.* 4. 6. *Let your Speech be alway with Grace, season'd with Salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every Man.* Again, 1 *Thess.* 5. 11. *Wherefore comfort your selves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.* And again, *Heb.* 10. 24, 25. *Let us Consider one another, to provoke unto Love, and to Good Works* ——— *Exhorting one another*, &c. Than which few Texts nothing can be more plain, and 'tis no great sign of our Reverence to Holy Scripture that such plain and positive Injunctions of it should be so little regarded.

And thus you see how both Reason and Scripture Conspire to bind it as a Duty upon us, to Season our Discourse with the things of Religion, which is that *Salutare Condimentum*, that Divine Salt, that will give a wholesome and relishing Savour to our Conversation, and withal (which is another property of Salt) preserve our Graces from Corruption and Decay. And truly Considering the Moment of the things themselves, and the great Usefulness of talking of them, though there were nothing of Duty or Obligation in the Case, one would think that People should Discourse of little or nothing else, and should be so far from declining this important Subject in its proper times and places, that they should fall abruptly into it, force

a Diſcourſe of it, talk of it in Seaſon, and (if that can be) out of Seaſon too, with Occaſion and without Occaſion, and ſhould even ſtop and lay hold on one another as they meet in the very Streets to talk of the great Concernments of Religion and of another Life (forgetting the little Trifles of this) ſo that the Main Intercourſe and Tranſaction of Mankind ſhould be about the One thing Neceſſary, and the whole World ſhould be but as one great *Spiritual Exchange.*

Why, thus I believe it will be under the Glorious and Happy Interval of the Church, when the true Primitive Spirit of Chriſtiany (which is now a Body without a Soul) ſhall revive, and the Antichriſtian one ſhall be deſtroy'd, when Truth and Righteouſneſs ſhall return to the long forſaken Earth, and Devotion and Charity be ſet again upon the Throne. Then the Holy Spirit of God will again deſcend in *Tongues* of *Fire*, and as the Minds of Men become more Spiritual, and refine more and more from the Dregs of Earth, their Converſation ſhall ſtill grow more Divine and Heavenly. Then will the preſent Impertinencies of Society be exchang'd for nobler Subjects of Diſcourſe, and inſtead of the vain Trifles and Amuſements of this World, the great things of Religion and Heaven ſhall be the Common Theme, which ſhall be talk'd of with all mutual Freedom and Temper, without Reſerve, without Paſſion, without Affectation, and without any of thoſe little Deſigns and Artifices which now both diſguiſe and diſreliſh Converſation, and make Men ſuſpicious and jealous of one another. All ſhall be then open, free and ingenuous, every Man's Heart a *thorough light* to every Man, as having no fear of what

what is bad, nor shame of what is good. So that they shall talk of what is Best in the best and most indearing Manner, till the Earth which is now polluted and prophaned with vain and wicked Conversation, shall be sanctify'd as it were into another Heaven, and the Conferences of Men shall be like the Discourses of Angels and glorified Spirits, *full of Grace and Truth.* Thus I say 'tis reasonable to think it will be, but in the mean time how would it both amaze and trouble any considering Man to see how this great and excellent Duty (for so I now call it) is neglected, how little Discourse there is of Religion passing in the Christian World, how Shy, Wary, and as it were Ashamed Men are of it, how it is Banish'd and Excluded from all Company, and forc'd to retire into Churches for Sanctuary; in short, how it is not only Carelesly omitted, but even industriously shun'd and avoided, and that by Men otherwise Good and Pious, and whose particular Profession it may be, obliges them to another sort of Deportment? But I have drawn a sad, and black *Nightpiece* of this already, and therefore need not further illustrate it here. Only let me ask you what would you think of this Story I am about to tell you from an Author of great Wit and Observation? Two Religious Persons, of an Order very Austere, and whose Habit sufficiently signified the Austerity of it, had some Occasion to be at Court; where they happen'd to fall into Company with a Man of much Wit, and that passed with all for one of great Intelligence, was known to deal much in News, and to be able to tell it agreeably, and with a good Grace. Who seeing himself in Company

M. de Villiers *Reflex. Sur les Defauts d' autrui.* Vol. 2. p. 59.

Company with two ſuch pieces of Gravity, thought he muſt now act another part, and ſo laying aſide the uſual Topicks of his Diſcourſe, he talk'd to 'em of nothing but of Devotion and Piety. But he quickly found himſelf miſtaken. For our Holy Fathers perceiving that their Courtier and Statesman would tell them no News, and that he was for talking to them only of Religious Matters, went out of the Room no leſs diſguſted than diſappointed. What, ſay they, as they were going out, does the Man take us for a Couple of Fools, does he think we are good for Nothing but *Devotion*?

Good for nothing but Devotion! Strange that Men ſhould think themſelves affronted by being counted Devout, and thus cowardly diſown and be aſhamed of their Character and Profeſſion, and that at the very time when they wore the Signs and Badges of it upon their Backs! One would think it ſhould be the Faſhion for Men both to talk, and to be talkt with in their own way, and about things relating to their Profeſſion. And ſo 'tis in all things beſides, in all Arts and Sciences, Trades, Callings and Occupations of Life, except only in Religion, and here even the very Profeſſors of it ſtart back, and are ſtruck Dumb, will talk of any thing rather than of the beſt and greateſt Subject, and which they are alſo ſuppoſed to underſtand beſt; and as ſome are ſaid to glory in their Shame, ſo theſe are aſhamed of their Glory. But yet however the Cauſe of Religion (thanks be to God) is not yet ſo deſperate, but that ſhe has ſome Friends left that dare and will ſtand by her, and are not afraid to wear her Colours, and publickly to own their Relation to her in the midſt of a Wicked

and

and Irreligious World. Which brings me to the last thing proposed, which was

Part. III. Thirdly to shew that those who are very good indeed, and have a due Sense of Religion, and a thorough Zeal for it, will shew it by their Discourse. I have already touch'd upon this in the Entrance upon this Subject, but shall now give it a more particular Consideration. And for the proof of it we have a great deal of Reason, and (thanks be to God) some Experience. For though there are some Degrees of Goodness that will be overborn by the forementioned Difficulties and Discouragements, yet there are some again that will not, but on the Contrary will outweigh them, and prevail against them. To which agrees that of our Saviour, *out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh.* The Words have a particular Force and Emphasis in the Original, ἐκ τοῦ περισσεύματος τῆς καρδίας, out of the overfulness, redundancy, or superfluity of the Heart. There are some Measures of Grace and Goodness which the Heart can hold in and keep to it self, but if larger quantities be pour'd into it, it will run over, and discharge it self into the Tongue, and so tho' every degree of Depth will not make it overflow, yet a very high and swelling Tide will, and out of the *Abundance* of the Heart the Mouth will be sure to speak.

For I Consider in the First place, that he that has a great Sense and Impression of Religion upon him, and whose Heart does thus *Abound* with it, must have a great Measure of *Faith.* For Faith being the great Mother Virtue, and the Head-spring of all that is good in us, it must as all other Springs do,

do, at leaſt riſe as high as the Streams that iſſue from it. The thing I intend in plain Words out of Figure is this, that our Faith being the Principal and Foundation of our other good Works and Habits, it muſt bear Proportion with its Effects. So that he that has a great Meaſure of Religious Impreſſion upon his Heart, muſt have a Meaſure of Faith in Proportion to it. That is, he muſt firmly believe, and be thoroughly perſwaded of the Truth of Religion, and of all the Fundamental Points of it. And that not only Habitually and in General, ſo as to be able to ſay Amen to the Creed when 'tis rehears'd, or to Anſwer in the Affirmative to the Articles of it when he is put to the Queſtion, *Doſt thou believe*, &c. or to ſubſcribe to it if occaſion be to ſhew his Orthodoxy, and that he is no *Heretick*; (for he that has no Senſe of Religion in his Heart, and makes no Conſcience of it in his Life may do all this) but alſo Actually and in particular, that is, I mean he muſt not only think thus of the Points of Religion whenever he thinks about them, but muſt alſo actually and effectually think of them, and have as it were a preſent view and intuition of what he believes before him. He muſt be a Believer not only in *Habit*, ſo as to be denominated a Chriſtian, and not a Jew or a Mahumetan, but in *Act*, ſo as to be an Attending and Conſidering Chriſtian. He muſt in ſhort not only have a Dormant and Periodical Faith that returns upon him at ſome certain Seaſons, and for the reſt of the time ſleeps and ſlumbers in him, but a quick, lively, actual and awaken'd Faith, ſuch a Faith as is next to Viſion. As for Inſtance, The Exiſtence of a Future World; I ſuppoſe ſuch a One not only to

believe

believe this Habitually, that is, to be ſo far Convinc'd of the Truth of the Propoſition, as to be ready to Subſcribe to it whenever the Queſtion is put to him, or if occaſion require, to write a Book in Defence of it, but to have the Actual thought of it reſiding in his Mind, to Converſe in the other World much after the ſame manner as other Men do in this, to See it and Feel it, and have as it were a Spiritual Senſation of it; in ſhort, to have it ſo intellectually preſent to him, and ſet before him, as ſcarce ever to loſe either its View, or its Impreſſion.

This is that Faith which overcomes the World, and very properly makes thoſe that have it more than Conquerors. The ſteddy View, or rather Poſſeſſion they have of the other World gives them an eaſy Victory and a daily Triumph over this. And though this be a very high, I queſtion not but that it is an attainable degree of Faith, and that there are ſome in the World that have it. But now the Things of Religion are of ſuch vaſt importance that if thus believed in the *Heart*, they will by their own weight force their way into the *Tongue*. Little things may be eaſily ſuppreſs'd, or Great ones that are believ'd with a lazy and imperfect Faith, but 'tis impoſſible that ſuch things ſo believ'd ſhould be kept to a Man's ſelf. No, he will be ſo full of them, and ſo big with them, that he will even Travel with the uneaſy Burthen, and be in Pain till he be deliver'd of it. The great things of the other World will be like Fire within him, and will ſo warm and inflame him with their Heat, and ſo dazzle and overflow him with their Light and Glory, that he will be no more

more able to forbear talking of them, than St. *Steven* when he look'd ſted'aſtly into Heaven, and ſaw the Glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding on his right Hand, could forbear crying out (though he knew he ſhould further inrage his Enemies, and forfeit his Life by it) *Behold, I ſee the Heavens open'd, and the Son of Man ſtanding on the right hand of God.* Such irreſiſtible Force and Efficacy have the great Objects of Religion as well upon the *Tongues* as upon the *Hearts* of Men, when they are ſet before them in the next View, and diſplaid in a full Light by that Faith which is the Subſtance of things hoped for, and the Evidence of things not ſeen.

For I Conſider again that this Actual and Lively Faith ſuppoſed to be in him that has this great Senſe and Impreſſion of Religion upon him, will not only raviſh and Tranſport him with the glorious and beatific Views of the other World, but will alſo (even by ſo doing) Eclipſe, Extinguiſh and utterly Annihilate all that we call Great and Conſiderable in this. The Earth ſeems but as a Point to a Mathematical Eye, and what then will it appear to the Eye of ſuch a ſteddy and intent Believer? Why even juſt Nothing. He ſees its Mighty Frame diſſolving, and all its Pomp and Glory vaniſhing and diſappearing, or rather he does not ſee it, but overlooks it, glances his piercing Eye beyond it, and caſts it into a *Shade*, making it no part of his inlarged Proſpect. And when the whole World appears to him ſo inconſiderable, ſo next to nothing, how flat and inſipid, how dead and unmoving muſt all Diſcourſe of it be to him! and what pleaſure can ſuch a one take to talk or be talk'd to an hour or two together about thoſe tri-

ſling Subjects that find the Body of Mankind in Diſcourſe, and give Entertainment to moſt Companies, and what a Penance muſt it be to his Spiritual and high-ſet Ear to be condemn'd to ſuch Impertinence! And yet he cannot be wholely Silent neither, but muſt even to keep himſelf awake, talk of ſomething, and what ſhould that be, ſince all Worldly Subjects are ſo unſavoury to him, but of the great things of Religion, whereof his Heart and Head too are full, and which imploy both his Meditation and his Affection.

I ſay *Affection*. For I further Conſider that Love is ſo Talkative and Self-betraying a Paſſion that it cannot well be Conceal'd when in any conſiderable degree. Upon which Account, as well as ſome others, it is deſervedly compared to *Fire*. 'Tis a Fire that not only burns, but Flames out, and diſcovers it ſelf by its own Light. Love is more capable of Hypocriſy, than of Diſguiſement, it being more eaſy to pretend and Counterfeit it where it is not, than to Conceal it where it is. A Man may indeed, without much difficulty, diſſemble his Hatred, or his Envy, or his Malice, or even his very Anger; and 'tis no very rare thing to meet with a ſort of People that have the Art ſo to manage their Reſentments, as to ſmile in a Man's Face at the very time when they are the moſt bitterly affected towards him, and would do him the greateſt Miſchief. But Love will not be ſo managed, but like Lightning will break through all Reſtraints till it either finds or makes a Paſſage. 'Tis ſo we know in all Worldly Objects, the Love of which is quickly known in thoſe who have a Tongue to expreſs it (which in theſe Caſes at leaſt) is always obſerv'd to be a true Index of the Heart. How

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eaſy a Matter is it to find out a *Lover* by an Hours Converſation with him! And how quickly does a *Covetous* Perſon betray himſelf, who can indeed hide his Money, but not his Love of it. For how Feelingly and ſenſibly and Cordially does he talk of it himſelf, and with what a true Guſto, and luſcious Reliſh does he hear it talkt of by others! How often are Bills and Bonds, Principle and Intereſt, Leaſes, Fines and Mortgages in his Mouth, and how does he even ſhake and tremble all over whenever he pronounces the Sacred Name of his dear Idol, ſo that you may eaſily feel how the Pulſe of his Heart beats, by the Motion of his Tongue. And why then ſhould not the Love of God and of Religion be as active and powerful as that which is Worldly, or Senſual? Without queſtion it would if it were in the ſame Degree, and did Men but love God and Heaven at the ſame rate as Miſers do the World (and I hope there are ſome that do ſo, and and a great deal more) they would be as forward to talk of theſe great things, as the others are of the little Objects of their Vile Paſſion. For why ſhould the Divine Lover be the only One that's aſham'd of his *Beſt Affection*, and unwilling to talk of the Delight of his Heart?

Eſpecially when 'tis further Conſider'd that the excellent Perſon we are now ſpeaking of, who has ſo great a Senſe of Religion, and lives under ſo Governing an Impreſſion of it, has not only a great Love and Reliſh of Piety, but alſo a great deal of Charity for his Neighbour, and withal no leſs a Zeal for the Honour and Glory of God, which two laſt will be of as much force to determine him to Religious Diſcourſe upon the Account of his Brother's Edification, as the Former was to diſ-

charge himſelf of a full Burthen, and for the eaſe of his own Heart and Mind. So that every way it ſeems not only Natural, but even neceſſary and unavoidable that thoſe who are very Good indeed, great Proficients in Piety, Mature Saints ſhould frequently Diſcourſe of Good things, however Chriſtians of a lower Form, and leſſer Age, *Infants* in Religion may not be yet arrived to the uſe of their Speech.

And does not the Scripture here alſo ſtrike in with Reaſon when it makes Religious Diſcourſe ſo conſiderable an Ingredient in the Character of a Good Man? For ſays the Royal Prophet of himſelf, and ſuch as himſelf, *Pſal.* 119. *I will ſpeak of thy Teſtimonies even before Kings, and will not be aſhamed.* And ſays his Wiſe Son, *Prov.* 10. 11, 21. *The Mouth of a Righteous Man is a Well of Life*, not a ſtanding Pool, but a Well, that is always ſpringing and riſing up, *and the Lips of the Righteous feedeth many*, that is to be ſure with Good and Wholeſome Diſcourſe. And this the Prophet *Malachi* repreſents not only by way of Character, as a thing that ſhould be, but as Matter of Fact, as the actual Practice of the Good Men of his time. *Mal.* 3. 16. *Then they that fear'd the Lord ſpake often one to another, and the Lord hearkned and heard it, and a Book of remembrance was written before him, for them that fear'd the Lord, and thought upon his Name.* And, to add no more, our Saviour tells us in plain Words, *Mat.* 12. 35. that *a Good Man out of the Good Treaſure of the Heart bringeth forth good things.* And to the like purpoſe elſewhere, *Mat.* 13. 52. he Compares a Good and a Wiſe Man to an Houſholder, which bringeth forth out of his Treaſure things New and Old, that is, produces

out of his rich Stock of Knowledge and Goodneſs variety of Spiritual Matter for the Entertainment and Edification of thoſe that Converſe with him.

And thus you ſee both from Reaſon and Scripture that however the moderately Good and Vertuous may be diſcouraged from the Practice of Religious Diſcourſe, yet thoſe that are eminently ſo, that are very much under the Power and Senſe of Religion, will ſhew it by their good Words as well as by their good Works, upon all Occaſions making Ladders from Earth to Heaven, and ſeaſoning their Diſcourſe with that Divine Salt, without which nothing can be grateful and ſavoury to a truely Pious and Chriſtian Palate. But then if all very good Men will Conduct and Order their Converſation thus, I leave it to be concluded by the way, conſidering how little good Diſcourſe there is going, what a Few very good Men there are in the World. Theſe indeed were always very thin Sown, but never certainly ſo thin as now, and accordingly never was Religion ſo little talkt of as Now. Diſputed it is enough, perhaps too much, but as for ſerious and practical Diſcourſe of it, ſuch as comes from a Principle of Goodneſs, and tends to the promotion of it, I think 'tis almoſt quite laid aſide. And yet ſome Few there are upon whom the Divine Spirit does yet deſcend in Tongues of Fire, who are both Burning and Shining Lights, have both Devotion and Courage enough to utter the wonderful Works of God, and whoſe Communication (as the Son of *Sirach* adviſes) *C. 9. v.* 15. is in the Law of the Moſt High. And theſe are they that bear up the ſinking Foundations of the Moral World, that keep Life and Breath in the Body of languiſhing and dying Piety, that main-

tain a ſenſe and remembrance of it in the Minds of Men, who would otherwiſe forget what Religion meant. And as the number of theſe Holy and Righteous Perſons ſhall either increaſe or decreaſe, ſo in all Human probability will the Tide of Religion (now almoſt at loweſt) either Ebb or Flow.

Directions for the Ordering our Religious Diſcourſe.

I ſee now nothing further wanting to the Intireneſs of this Diſcourſe, unleſs it be to lay down ſome Rules and Directions for the better Management of our Religious Converſation. Whereof the Firſt that I would commend and have obſerv'd is this.

1. *Never to talk of Religion but when you think of it.* 'Twere well if you thought of it ſome time before hand by way of Preparation, but that you do ſo at the very time when you talk of it, is I think abſolutely neceſſary. The Importance of the Subject is certainly great enough to *demand* this Caution, only perhaps it may be thought too great to *Need* it. But that's a Miſtake. For there are a ſort of People in the World that have ſuch a lazy, unthoughtful, liſtleſs, yawning way of talking of Religion. that one would almoſt think they talkt in their ſleep. They have a Road of pious Expreſſions, and are got into a certain Set of good Words, ſuch as *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *What pleaſe God*, *The Lord's Will be done*, *We are all Mortal*, and the like; which upon all Occaſions they go over by rote, juſt as a Sea-Man does his Compaſs, or rather as a Bell-Man does his godly Rhimes, without thinking what they ſay, or being at all affected with it. Methinks when I hear ſuch People talk of Religion, I fancy the Chimes going

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to the Tune of a Pſalm. The Truth is, there is but too much reſemblance between them, they both go as they are Set, and One almoſt as Mechanically as the Other. Only there is this unhappy difference in the Caſe, that the Bells oftentimes call People to their Devotion, whereas theſe Sleepy, dreaming Talkers of Religion do but make 'em ſick of it. Whenever therefore you talk of Religion, in the firſt place be ſure to be *awake*, and to think and conſider of what you ſay. The Next thing I would Commend, by way of Direction, is,

2. To talk of it *Seriouſly*, *Gravely* and *Soberly*, towards which the Conſideration of what is ſpoken will be a very great help and advantage. There are two ſorts of People that tranſgreſs this Rule, in diſcourſing of Religion. Thoſe that talk of it *Irreverently*, and with a looſe and careleſs Ayre, as if they thought it a Trifle, hardly Worthy of ſpending their Breath about it; and thoſe that talk of it *Preciſely*, after a Canting, Whining and Sighing Manner, with an affected Tone, and an ill-contrived Look, as if they were Conjuring or telling Fortunes rather than diſcourſing of Holy things. Now though theſe are Perſons of a Character very different from one another, yet I think they both agree in this, that inſtead of advantaging the Intereſt of Religion, they do but Proſtitute, Prophane and make it Cheap, and ſet the taſte of thoſe of good Senſe againſt it, who cannot indure to ſee ſo Serious and Sacred a thing as Religion is, either unhallow'd, or ridiculed. I would therefore have Religion talkt of, Firſt Reverently and Seriouſly, in Oppoſition to the Way of the *Libertine*; and then Gravely and Soberly and Manly, in Oppoſition to that of the *Phariſee*, without any

Sighing, or Winking, or Catching the Breath or *Skrewing* up the Mouth, or any other fantaſtick *Affectations*. For all this is but the *Grimace* of Religion, ſuch as is forced and put on by thoſe that have it not in its true Power and Spirit, and which thoſe that have it, do not find Occaſion or Inclination to uſe. For intending only to expreſs what they Feel, and what really paſſes in their Souls, they content themſelves with the Natural way of doing it, which is ſimple and plain; whereas the other not ſpeaking from an inward Fund of Goodneſs, but being only to act a part, or apt (as having no certain Meaſure) to over-act it, and ſo run into Affectations. The ſubſtance and intendment therefore of this Rule, in ſhort is, *So to talk of Religion, as not to betray the Want of it by your Talk.* For another Direction I would Commend

3. That Religion be diſcours'd of *Practically*. And that both as to the Matter, and as to the Manner, wherein I intend to exclude the Way of *Notion*. and the Way of *Contention*, the former not tending much to the promoting of Edification, and the latter being always an hindrance to it. When we talk of Religion we ſhould remember the Deſign of it, and accordingly Diſcourſe of it not Notionally and Speculatively, nor yet Wranglingly and Contentiouſly, either to ſhew our own Skill in Arguing, or to try anothers, but Cordially and Spiritually, Chriſtianly and Devoutly, after a plain, hearty and affectionate Manner, ſo as to anſwer the ends of that Charity which Edifies, and not of that vain Knowledge which puffed up. Controverſies do but little good even in *Writing*, wherein Victory is oftner ſought than Truth, but much leſs when managed by the Tongue, there being

but

but very few that have either Art enough to talk Cloſely, or Temper enough to talk Calmly upon thoſe ſhort Views, and that very broken and tranſient Conſideration of the Subject which are allow'd in the way of Oral Diſcourſe, eſpecially in Common Converſation. And there is nothing more indecent than to ſee People grow Warm and out of Humour, much more to be Noiſy and Clamorous, and in a Paſſion about Religion. 'Tis indeed unbecomming enough at any time, or upon any Occaſion, but never does it ſit worſe upon Men then when they make that the Subject of their fierce Contentions, which ought to be the Cure of them. But to give Religion yet a further Advantage from our Mouths 'twere well if Care were taken.

4. That it be diſcours'd of *Seaſonably.* The Wiſe Man tells us that to every thing there is a Seaſon, and withal that every thing is beautiful in its Time. Not that it can ever be out of Seaſon to do good, but only that there are ſome Seaſons and Circumſtances wherein Diſcourſes of Religion are not ſo apt nor likely to do it. And theſe Seaſons ought carefully to be avoided, and fit and proper ones Choſen for this purpoſe. For there is Prudence and Management in all Things, and if we make Choice of a Convenient time to give Phyſick to a Man's Body, much more ſhould we when we adminiſter to his Soul. And that I call a convenient time, when 'tis likely Men will be the Better for what is ſaid to them, let it be when it will. For there are times again when Men are not likely to be the Better, but rather the Worſe, and to talk Religion to them then, is both to ſpill your Phyſick, and to injure your Patient. Upon which Conſide-

Conſideration perhaps it would not do ſo well to fall aboard a Man abruptly, and chop down right into a Diſcourſe about Religion with him, without ſome occaſion or other, either Naturally offer'd or Artificially contriv'd. For that looks either like Phariſaical Oſtentation of Religion on your ſide, or as if you thought the Perſon you beſpeak in too great a neceſſity of ſuch an Application. Neither of which can be very acceptable to him. No, there are ways of Addreſs and ſweet Inſinuation that may be uſed both more acceptably, and more ſucceſsfully, whereof we have variety of Inſtances in the Converſation of our Saviour Chriſt, and particularly in his intercourſe with the *Woman* of *Samaria*. Again, For the ſame reaſon though there be occaſion offer'd perhaps it would not be ſo Convenient to take hold of it in a great and promiſcuous Company, whoſe Tempers and Humours you know not, leſt they ſhould be more offended with your ſhew of Oſtentation, than Edify'd with the real Goodneſs of your Diſcourſe. Nor again it may be would a Wiſe Man be very free of Religion at a Publick Feaſt, when beſides the Number and the Mixture of the Company, People are commonly diſpoſed to greater Freedom and Pleaſantry than is Conſiſtent with the Gravity of ſuch ſerious Diſcourſes. Nor again would I have Religion Mingled with our *Sports*, nor with the Hurry and Noiſe of *Buſineſs*, nor with our *Drink*. For what an Odd thing would it be to hear a Man come out bluntly with Religion, or begin a Diſcourſe about Heaven when he is a Hunting and the Dogs at full Cry, or when he is dealing and trading upon the *Exchange*, or when he is making himſelf chearful in a Tavern. I ſay *Chearful*, for though he be not Drunk, yet

yet Religion and a Bottle make but a very indifferent Mixture, insomuch that the Indecency of it is got into a Proverb, which forbids *Preaching over one's Glass.* But there is another sort of mingling of Religion, and that is when we sow and scatter it hear and there among our Worldly Talk, without observing due distances between them, after the manner of those who will talk a little of Religion, and then a little of News, Business or Fashions, and then a little of Religion again; so Chequering and Interlacing their Discourse with these two extremely different Subjects. But this is an unbecoming Mixture, and such as does not well Comport with the Dignity of Religion, whose Sacredness implies *Separation*; and requires it should be discours'd of alone, and by it self. We are are also to Consider to whom we speak, and not talk Religion to a Man that is Drunk, or in a great Passion, or who professedly Scoffs and Laughs at all Religion, and those that talk of it, making them both the Object of his Mockery and Ridicule. For this would be in our Saviour's Expression, to cast Pearls before Swine, which one would not do, not only for the value of the *Pearles*, but also out of some Pity and tender regard to the *Swine* too, considering how much our good Discourses will inflame the Reckoning, and aggravate the Condemnation of those wicked Wretches, whom they do not amend, or by Accident make worse. The short then of this Rule is, that we take Care so to Time, Accommodate, and Circumstantiate our good Discourses that they may really do good, and make those to whom they are Address'd the Better for them. Which Caution ought more particularly to be observ'd in that Nicer and more Delicate part of Religious Discourse, which

which conſiſts in *Reproof* and Brotherly Admoniti-on, for which (as being an ungrateful Work and Labour of Love) the ſofteſt and moſt Favourable Seaſons are to be ſought out, the *Mollia Tempora Fandi*, when Men are moſt treatable and beſt diſpo-ſed, moſt ſedate and recollected, and when this harſher Phyſick will Work moſt kindly with them. And for this we have the Example of God himſelf, who ſeems to have uſed the like Addreſs towards the Firſt Offender, Chuſing to treat with him about his Miſcarriage not immediately upon the Commiſ-ſion of it, when his Paſſions were up, and his Soul ruffled and diſcompoſed, but, as is moſt probable, at ſome convenient diſtance, and after ſome time of Recollection, when the Sediment of his trou-bled Spirit was fallen, and the Regions of his Soul pretty well clear'd up, *in the Cool of the Day*. I ſhall now add but one Direction more concerning the Management of Religious Diſcourſe, and that is

5. To join along with it the great Advantage of a good Life, which will give Weight to our Words, and Attention to our Hearers, and is it ſelf whe-ther in the Pulpit, or out of it, the beſt Eloquence. With this, nothing ſo mean or ordinary can come from us but what will carry a Grace and an Autho-rity with it, and will be well accepted. But with-out it though we ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, we ſhall be but as a ſounding Braſs, and a tinkling Cymbal. I ſay though we *ſhould* ſo ſpeak. But then again I muſt tell you, that 'tis no very eaſy matter for an ill Man to do ſo. For being a Stranger to the inward Life and Power of Reli-gion he can hardly be ſuppoſed to know enough of it to talk well of it, nor again is it likely he

ſhould

ſhould have Courage enough to ſpeak out all that he knows, becauſe the greateſt part of it will recoil upon himſelf. But ſuppoſe he ſhould be able to get over theſe two Difficulties, yet after all the Beſt that he can ſay, will have but little Power to perſwade, and that becauſe He ſays it, who is not himſelf perſwaded by it. If therefore you would have your good Diſcourſe have as good Succeſs, take Care that your Hands do not Contradict your Tongue, that your Deeds give not the Lie to your Words, and that you live your ſelf as you exhort others. Which Direction, though the laſt ſet down, is yet the Firſt I would have follow'd.

There are ſome whom if you were to hear talk a little while, and knew no more of them, you would think they were Saints newly dropt from Heaven, and that they had nothing of *Adam* in them. So Charmingly ſet, and Spiritually tuned are their Tongues, and ſo Divine and full of Heavenly Ayre is their Diſcourſe. And thus far 'tis well. But when after having heard their Seraphic Voice a Man ſhall look down and behold their Cloven Feet, and ſhall obſerve that thoſe who talk the Language of *Angels*, do yet hardly live the Life of *Men*, what a Surprize, and what a Scandal muſt ſuch a Diſcovery be! I ſay Scandal, for Nothing brings a greater upon Religion than a Hypocrite diſcover'd. As long as he keeps on his Diſguiſe 'tis well enough, but when that's off, he is like a Sepulchre uncover'd, all over Offence and Abomination, and even Good Men are thought the worſe of for his Sake. Thoſe that have Once found a pious Talker to be an ill Liver, are apt ever after ſo to join thoſe Ideas together, as to fancy they are all alike; and will be hardly perſwaded to truſt a Man of a *Religious*

Outſide

Outſide any more. However to be ſure He himſelf will never be thought well of again, and if he ſhould chance to be reform'd in Earneſt, he can never hope to Convince thoſe that knew him before the Reality of his Change, it being impoſſible he ſhould do it by greater Tokens of Sanctity and Profeſſions of Piety than he gave out before when he was known to be no more than a *Pretender*. Such a one therefore he will be ever taken to be, and as long as that Preſumption lies upon him, he muſt not expect to do any good by the Moſt Heavenly Diſcourſes his Head can invent, or his Tongue can utter. His Foul Actions will Continually baffle all his fine Harangues, and what was impiouſly alledg'd againſt Our Saviour will be a juſt and reaſonable prejudice here, *Joh.* 10. 20. *He hath a Devil, why hear ye him?*

But the truth of it is, theſe Men were much better let all Diſcourſe about Religion alone, and leave it to ſhift for it ſelf, than to pretend to ſtay up her tottering Ark with their unhallow'd hands. They do but diſcredit and profane it, and bring an ill report upon it, and withal diſcourage thoſe Few from talking of it who could do it to better purpoſe, but will not, for fear they ſhould be taken for Hypocrites too as was remarqu'd in the Beginning. And beſides one would think it ſhould be a Puniſhment to them to talk of things they have no true delight in, or Reliſh for, and which recoil again upon their guilty, and perhaps bluſhing Faces. However to be ſure they can't do it with that open Freedom, that liberal Aſſurance, and that Ingenious Ayre which all Diſcourſe about Religion ſhould have, and which a Clear and Good Conſcience can only give. Which puts me in mind of a very pertinent

tinent ſaying of St. *Auſtin*, ſpoken in relation to that Petition of the Lord's Prayer which is by ſo many turn'd into a Curſe upon themſelves, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* Vis Securus dicere! ſays he, Fac quod dicis. *Would you ſay it Securely? then do what you ſay.* And the ſame I apply to Diſcourſe about Religion. Would you talk of it Securely, with true Freedom and Aſſurance, without any ſecret Checks or faint-hearted Miſ-givings? The Rule is both ſhort and infallible, *Fac quod dicis*, do what you ſay. Practice as much of Religion as you Talk, and then you have a full Licence to Talk as much of it as you Pleaſe.

Tom. 8. in *Pſal.* 103. p. 426.

A Diſ-

A Diſcourſe of the Fear of DEATH.

HEB. ij. 15.

——*And deliver them who through fear of Death were all their Life-time Subject to Bondage.*

AND ſure there are none that have more need of a Deliverer, or that are with more Difficulty deliver'd, than the Perſons of this Character and Condition. For as of all the Evils incident to Human Life there is none greater than the Fear of Death (for even Death it ſelf may not be compared with it) ſo alſo there is none more Natural and Neceſſary, and Conſequently more difficult to be either prevented or removed. The Fear of Death is juſt as Natural as the Love of Life, and nothing leſs than Death it ſelf can wholly ſilence either of theſe Paſſions. That indeed is ſo intire and ſo thorough a Divorce that it not only diſunites the Soul from the Body, but from the Love of it too; and by that at at once cuts off all the ties that faſten us to the Corporeal and Senſible World, which we cannot be perfectly looſen'd from as long as we are united to our own Bodies; But there is nothing elſe that I know of that

that has Power enough to make us wholly out of love with Life, and consequently utterly to rid us of the Fear of Death. Not to Fear Death therefore at all, a Man had need actually Die; or be Dead, for so long as he Lives, so long as he is united to his Body, and by that to a sensible World, which by the General Order of Nature gratifies and entertains all those Powers of Sensation which are at present awaken'd in him, and so gives some Rest and Repose to his Natural Desire of Happiness, so long he must needs fear Death, if 'twere upon no other account than as 'tis a dissolution of Life, and of that Natural Sweetness and Pleasure that attends it. So that the Fear of Death seems to be like some of those inveterate Cleaving Diseases that are so lodged and radicated in the Blood and Spirits, so incorporated as it were into the very Habit and Constitution of the Body, that they cannot be put off but when that is, and are Curable only by *Death*, the *Universal Remedy*.

It lies indeed very hard upon Man, and 'tis what renders his Condition in this World very pitiable, that an evil which is so great in it self (as the Fear of Death is) should withal be so difficult to be removed. That that which be-clouds the Light of his Mind, and is of it self enough to distrelish the whole Comfort of his Life, should be so close an Attendant to both, and that what makes a Man so burthensom and uneasy to himself, should be as inseparable from him as himself. But thus it is, and the same may be said in proportion concerning the other instances of his Misery as well as this. The Lesser Evils of Human Life have many and cheap Remedies, and are cured as easily as they might be born, while in the mean time those which are less

Supportable are (to complete the Misery of Life, and if possible, to wean us from it) at the same time less Curable. But as there is no Temporal Evil less supportable, when in Extremity, than the Fear of Death, so there is none less Curable than that.

The Greatness of this Evil, and the Difficulty of its Cure have made Life a very great Misery to some Men, and truly a very Mixt, Insincere, Questionable Blessing to all, and both together have drawn down Pity and Compassion from Heaven, and made it an undertaking worthy of the Son of God to relieve poor Mortals in some Measure from an Evil which they are so little able to bear, and less able to remove, that so the Burthen if not absolutely taken off, might yet be somewhat lightned, and better proportion'd to the Shoulders that were to stand under it, and that as far as was Possible *this bitter Cup might pass from us.* By the way we may guess at the Malignity of the Disease from the Nobleness of the Remedy. Too Noble indeed for a Creature, if one of less value would have served the turn. But such was the Stubbornness of the Fatal Evil that it would yield to no less Soveraign application, and such the Goodness and Mercy of God that he thought it not too Good, but would rather his own Son should once taste of Death, than that Man should always live under a constant dread and fearful expectation of it. For it seems it was one part of the wonderful undertaking of Christ to deliver Men from the Fear of Death as well as from the Evil Consequences of it, as we may here learn from the Apostle, who speaking of this undertaking of Christ, tells us, *That forasmuch as the Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.* And that to a dou-

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ble End or Purpose. 1. *That through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil.* which denotes more immediately our Deliverance from the evil *Consequences* of Death. And 2. (as in the Words of the Text) *That he might deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their life-time Subject to Bondage.* Wherein is express'd our deliverance from the *Fear* of Death, which is here made a part of our Saviour's undertaking for Mankind, and Particularly mention'd as one of the powerful Motives that drew him down from Heaven to take upon him our Nature, and to suffer in it.

We have here the Fear of Death, the Bondage to which this Fear Subjects Men, and the Deliverance from this Fear and from this Bondage.—— *And deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their life-time Subject to Bondage.* So that the Words do upon the first View point out to us these Three Subjects of Discourse.

First, *The Fear of Death.*
Secondly, *The sad effect of this Fear where it is predominant.*
Thirdly, *The Remedy of Both.*

First, *Of the Fear of Death.* This in General is either *Natural* or *Rational.* By the Natural Fear of Death, I mean that which prevents all Reason and Discourse about it, as not depending upon any thing without, but resulting wholly from the inward Frame and Constitution of our Natural Being. By the Rational Fear of Death I here understand that to which we are not pre-determin'd by

any Natural Prevention or Inſtinct, but which is purely grounded upon Reaſon; by that Meaning, not preciſely right or ſolid Reaſon, but all or any ſuch Motives or Arguments as our Reaſon ſhall offer and preſent to us indifferently, whether they are Solid or Not.

Which Fear of Death however it may be often found to be *Irrational* upon a true account and eſtimation of things, there being not perhaps ſufficient Ground for it, may yet be very properly call'd a *Rational* Fear in the Senſe that I now uſe the word Rational in, as 'tis oppoſed to that Natural Fear of Death which has no Reaſon or Argument, but mere Nature for its Foundation. I ſhall diſcourſe of theſe two Fears diſtinctly.

1. There is a Natural Fear of Death in Men, which is not an Original but a derivative Paſſion, reſulting from the Natural Love of Life. We naturally fear Death becauſe we naturally love Life. So that this Paſſion is only a Conſequence of the other, or rather but a different way of expreſſing it.

If it be demanded why there is ſuch a Paſſion as the Fear of Death, or rather as the Love of Life in our Natures, I anſwer for many wiſe Ends and important Reaſons, theſe two eſpecially.

1. That Man might perſevere to *Live*.
2. That he might Live in *Society*.

1. That he might perſevere to *Live*, that he might continue in his preſent State, and abide in the Station wherein God had placed him, and not upon the account of any Trouble or Pain (whereof he is like to have no want as long as he lives here)

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Voluntarily quit his Poſt, till God ſhould be pleaſed to diſcharge him. And not only ſo, but that he ſhould be induced to take care of his Life, and avoid all ſuch Things or Actions as might ſhorten or deſtroy it, and uſe all ſuch Means as are neceſſary to preſerve and prolong it, which he would either Forget or Neglect, or Studiouſly Omit to do were it not for that Pleaſure and Sweetneſs, which is annex'd to Life. Which is almoſt all the Pleaſure that ſome Men have, who by the Iniquity of their Circumſtances may be ſo far ſtript of the Particular Enjoyments and Comforts of Life, as to have little more left them than the bare Natural Pleaſure and Sweetneſs of Life in General, were it not for which there would be Nothing in the World to ingage their further Continuance in it.

2. That he might live in *Society*. As Man is not a Creature fit to live out of Society, ſo were it not for the Fear of Death he would not be fit to live in it. For though reaſonable Creatures ought to be govern'd by Reaſon, yet in the Poſture that Human Nature now ſtands in Reaſon alone is too weak a Principle to keep a World of Men in Order, whoſe Corrupt and Irregular Paſſions would upon all Occaſions tranſport them into great Violences one againſt another if they had nothing elſe but mere reaſon to reſtrain them. Paſſion therefore that is not to be govern'd by *Reaſon*, muſt be govern'd by *it Self*, that is, One Paſſion muſt be ſet to Confront and Counterpoiſe another. And ſince Rational Creatures will not be order'd in a Rational way, and keep within the limits of their Duty upon the Conſideration of Right and Equity, Force muſt be made uſe of as a Suppletory to the defects of Reaſon, and here comes in the Neceſſity of Civil

Government. But now if Men did not Naturally dread and stand in Fear of Death, the Government would have no sufficient hold upon them, or Ascendant over them. But by the help of this Passion they are kept in Awe, and so in Order; which therefore serves as an Instrument of Government, and as an expedient to procure the end of a Sociable Life.

I pass now Secondly from the Natural to the Rational Fear of Death. This I shall Consider,

1. As it generally is.
2. As in strict and right Reason it ought to be.

1. As it generally is. It is generally very great, I may say extravagant. There is nothing so much, nor so universally fear'd as Death. Men fear that who fear nothing else, and not only the thing it self, but even the Name of it is terrible, and makes those that hear it tremble. *Death*, there is a terror in the very Sound, and our Blood and our Spirits do as it were retire from it. Nay even that which carries any Relation to it, or any sensible representation of it, or any way brings it to our Mind, the very *Picture* of it is formidable. The hearing of a Passing-Bell, the Solemnity of a Funeral, the Dress of the Mourners, nay, even the sight of an empty Coffin that has only the *Colour* of Mortality, strikes us with Horrour. And yet these are only some of the Out-guards that make up the Retinue of the King of Terrours. How dreadful then does he himself appear, and how do the greatest Kings and Emperours, nay, what is more, *Philosophers* and *Christians* tremble before him! Some

Some Few indeed there are (but they are generally thoughtleſs and unreflecting Perſons) who have little more than the Natural Fear of Death. That indeed they cannot ſhake off, but as to any dread that ariſes from Conſideration or Rational Apprehenſions they have little or nothing of it, but go out of the World almoſt as unconcernedly as they came in. But theſe I ſuppoſe are inſtances of a rare Contingency, and I know of nothing but either great *Stupidity*, or extraordinary *Sanctity* that can produce ſuch a degree of indifferency and unconcernedneſs. But for the generality, Men have too much Apprehenſion, and too little Innocence, to be thus fearleſs and unmoved at the Approach of Death. They fear it upon rational Views and Proſpects, as well as by a Natural Horrour, and in this reſpect the moſt thoughtful and active Minds are apt to fear it moſt, as being moſt capable to ſurvey it in its ſeveral Views and Poſtures, and able to draw the moſt lively Images and Repreſentations of it. The better the Imagination here, the brighter the Scenes, and the ſtronger the Fear. But they that are under the leaſt rational Concern for Death (becauſe indeed they think little about it) fear it however to great degrees, and upon ſeveral accounts. For Death has various faces according as the Light is wherein we view it, and every Aſpect looks grim, and excites its proper Fear in the Hearts of Miſerable Men. Some fear it as 'tis a quitting of the Body, which conſidering the cloſe Union that is between Body and Soul, they imagin cannot be done without great Pain. Some again fear it as 'tis a leaving of the World, which is ed and enjoy'd with too much Paſſion not to with Trouble and Sorrow. Others again

a thing that indangers their Being, and threatens them with Annihilation. Others as an entrance upon a new and altogether unexperienc'd State and way of Life, which muſt be now led in a new World, in new Company, and after a new and ſtrange Manner. And laſt of all Death is fear'd in reſpect of thoſe diſmal Conſequences it draws after it upon the Guilty and ill-affected Soul, whom it delivers over to the juſt Judgment of God and Eternal Damnation. Theſe are the ſeveral Views and Proſpects of Death, and the ſeveral Arguments upon which Men ground their Fear of it. And ſo much to repreſent the Rational Fear of Death as generally it is. But Men being every whit as unreaſonable in their *Fears* as in their *Deſires*, it will be requiſite that we proceed to conſider this Rational Fear of Death.

2. As in ſtrict and right Reaſon it ought to be. Imagination has here very much Swoln and blown up the Idea of Death, and brought in a very large and frightful Bill of Terrours, but for our Comfort Reaſon will ſtrike off a great part of the Accompt.

For Firſt, 'Tis moſt Certain that Death ought not in reaſon to be fear'd upon the account of that *Pain* which is vulgarly preſumed to attend the ſeparation of the Soul from the Body. This Fear is unphiloſophical, as being founded upon a falſe Notion of the Union between Soul and Body, which is not (as our groſs Imagination is apt to Suggeſt) by any Contact, Implication, or Coheſion of one of theſe Subſtances with the Other, as Bodies are united together, but is only a Mutual Reciprocation of Action and Paſſion between Soul and Body, which are then ſaid to be United when Certain Motions

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of the Body depend upon Certain Thoughts of the Mind, and when Certain Thoughts of the Mind follow upon Certain Motions of the Body. This is the Union of Soul and Body according to its *Formal* Notion. The *Cauſe* of this Union is no other than the general Law or Will of God. The *Condition* of it is ſuch a Certain Temper or Diſpoſition of the Bodily Frame, as ſuppoſe, that the Heart be able to ſend up animal Spirits to the Brain, and that the Brain be able to ſend them back again by the Nerves into the Muſcles for the Motion of the Members. As long as that Mechanical Diſpoſition of the Parts laſts, ſo long by the Order of God this reciprocation of dependance as to Action and Paſſion does alſo laſt, and when that Diſpoſition ceaſes then by the ſame Order of God this Reciprocation Ceaſes. And this is what we call *Death*, *viz.* when ſuch a Spirit has no longer any relation of dependencyas to Action or Paſſion upon ſuch a Body. But now what *Pain* can we conceive to be in this? 'Tis plain that all the Pain is previous, in thoſe preparatory Motions which ſerve to demoliſh the *Mechaniſm* of the Body, which when it has receiv'd its laſt Indiſpoſition, can no longer affect the Soul with Pain, all relation of dependency being then ſuppoſed to be at an End. So that that Pain which we groſly fancy to be in Death upon the Separation of Soul and Body, is really the Pain of *Sickneſs*, and ought to be reckon'd only upon that Score, and 'tis Certain that many a Man has undergone, and does daily undergo more of this Pain without Dying, than many of thoſe do who Die. And if theſe Pains are not ſo mightily fear'd when conſider'd as terminating in *Sickneſs*, why ſhould the Difference of *Death* make them ſo dreadful, which can add

add nothing to the *Pain*, whatever it may do besides? So that Death is not to be fear'd upon this first and common Pretence.

Neither Secondly, Is it to be fear'd as 'tis a *Leaving* of the *World*. For besides the Vanity and Vexation of all things here (which will soon make a Wise Man more Sick of the World than of any other Disease) that which we call Leaving the World is only leaving one certain part of it, and that in all probability the meanest part of God's whole Creation. The Meanest in its Natural State and Order, besides that accessory Vanity brought upon the Creature by Sin. *Rom.* 8. 20. And since the Universe is of such an unimaginable extent, and that there is such variety of Mansions in the House of God, shall we be so fond of one Room, and that in all likelihood the worst, as to dread a removal into another Region! For as I said by our leaving the World we can understand no more than our leaving this part of it, where we were born, and bred, and have for some time had our dwelling. So that in this respect to Die is but like being sent Abroad to Travel into a Foreign Country, or, if you would have a Comparison from Nature and Philosophy, like the passing of a Comet out of one Vortex into another. 'Tis not to be exported beyond the Universe into an Empty space, nor to be our selves reduced into a State of *Emptiness*.

For Thirdly, As to the pretence of *Annihilation*, 'tis Certain, First, That there is no reasonable ground for any such Suspicion, since both Philoso-

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phy and Scripture are ſo directly againſt it. But Secondly, If there were, as ſome Fancy, and more perhaps wiſh, yet why ſhould this be made an Argument of Fear? Is it ſuch a dreadful thing to be in a ſtate of Indifferency and Neutrality, to be neither Happy nor Miſerable? Is there ſo much terrour in *Nothing*? 'Tis a State (if I may call it ſo) which we have all been in before we were made, and 'tis what we experiment in great Meaſure every Night, when in a deep and ſound Sleep we forget our ſelves and the whole World, and loſe even the Conſciouſneſs and Perception of our very Being. And is there any thing ſo dreadful in this? Or does it make us afraid to repoſe our Heads upon our Pillows?

Then Fourthly, As to the Objection of *Novelty* taken from a New Life, New World, New Company and the like, this one would think ſhould rather invite, than terrify us. For would we always dwell here in theſe Houſes of Clay, and be no otherwiſe than we are, and ſee no more of the Works of our Great Creator; We are Curious and deſirous of Novelty while we live, and are for making New Experiments in Nature, and New Diſcoveries upon this little Ball of Earth, and are not a little pleaſed when by the favourable aid of a *Teleſcope* we have ſpied out a New Star, or a New Feature in the Face of the Moon, and ſhall we be afraid of Death becauſe it makes that Inſtrument Needleſs, becauſe it preſents us with a New Scene, becauſe we ſhall then Change *States*, *Worlds*, and *Companies*? Ay but to Converſe with Spirits—— But wilt not thou then be a Spirit too? And will it not then be as Natural and Sutable to thee to Converſe with

with Spirits, as it is now to Converse with Men? For what is it but Similitude and Proportion that reconciles either? We see that Persons of low Rank and Education are ashamed to be among Courtiers and People of high Degree, who yet Converse freely with one another. So that we may well discount all these several pretences for the Fear of Death out of our Reckoning, and then there will remain only One, *viz.* the sad Consequences of Death in reference to the Judgment of God, and Eternal Damnation. And indeed this is the only thing for which Death ought reasonably to be fear'd, and this carries an infinite Terrour with it. Not that Death is always to be fear'd for this (for then indeed our Condition were deplorable) but that whenever Death is Terrible this is the thing that truly makes it so, and the only thing that can rationally do it. All the rest are but Bugbears to fright Children, this is the only *Rational* Terrour in Death. And so the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 15. 56. *The Sting of Death is Sin.* As this is that which gives Death all its Power over us: So this is that which makes it truly formidable to us. This is that which arms it with a *Sting*. And 'tis a sharp Sting indeed, whereby it wounds Men with Eternal Pains hereafter, and with most amazing apprehensions here. Which leads me to Consider,

Secondly, *The Sad Effect of this Fear of Death where it is predominant.* Many are the Sad Effects of this Passion, but that mention'd in the Text is that it Subjects those that are under it, during their whole Lives (supposing that they are under it so long) to a State of *Bondage*, to a Miserable Spirit, and Slavish Temper of Mind. By which the least

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that we can understand is that the Fear of Death is enough to sowre all the Sweetness, and spoil all the Comfort of Life, or that there is no tolerable Enjoyment of Life till a Man is got above the Fear of Death. Not therefore to mention the Throws and Agonies, the Distractions and Confusions of Mind that the Fear of Death produces in impenitent and despairing Sinners in their *last* Hours, whereof History and Observation may furnish us with many Tragical Instances (though by the way, at the rate that Men live, I wonder there are not more) I shall consider only at present that constant Habitual effect (as I may call it) which it has throughout their whole Lives, that which the Text here takes Notice of, and expresses by their being all their Life-time subject to *Bondage*. The Sense of which I cannot better express than I have already in this Proposition; that there is no tolerable Enjoyment of Life till a Man is got above the Fear of Death.

When once indeed a Man is arrived to this pitch, he may then be said truly to *Live*, and may call Life his own, as being able to relish and enjoy every part of it, but till then his Life may be more properly call'd a Penance, a Torture, a Death, any thing than an Enjoyment. For let a Man's Condition in this World be otherwise never so Fortunate, and the Circumstances of it never so delightsome and advantagious; let him have his own *Wish* and others *Envy*, let him be never so full of Honours, Pleasures, and Riches, yea, and of *Days* too wherein to enjoy them, yet what Content or Satisfaction will he be able to take in all this, if the whole ends in dark Prospect, and he has upon him all

all the while the Apprehensions of an angry God, and the Fears of Death, Judgment and Hell? With what satisfaction can a Man, whose Mind is fill'd and over-set with these great Ideas, enjoy the most luscious Pleasure that this Life, or this World can afford? How can he that expects a Miserable *Eternity* relish any of the little Divertisements of *Time*? How can he that fears he shall enter upon the Portion of the Damn'd immediately after Death find any Savour in the short Delights of a vain transitory Life? How can these little Pleasures relish with those mighty Fears, the Pleasures of Time with the Fears of Eternity, and how can he that apprehends everlasting Sorrows then, find in his Heart to laugh or rejoyce now? *Solomon*, indeed bids his young Man rejoice in his Youth, and let his Heart chear him in the Days of his Youth, but the difficulty is how he shall be able to do this, if at the same time he is to consider what follows, that for all these things God shall bring him into Judgment. How can Temporary Joy and the Apprehensions of Eternal Judgment consist together! And does not the Wise Man imply by this severe *Irony* that they cannot.

Eccl. 11. 9.

The Capacity of Man is too narrow to yield a full Attention to two contrary Sentiments, especially if one be so very much stronger than the other; and we find that actual Pain does always lessen, and if very great, wholly swallow up and drown the Sense of actual Pleasure. For what would the sweetest Strains in Musick signify to a Man in the Extremity of the Stone or Gout? But now the very Apprehension of an Evil, if very

very Extraordinary, though *Future*, will fill and ingage the Capacity as much, and ſometimes more than the preſent actual Senſe of one that is leſſer. And we may gueſs by our Saviour's Agony in the Garden, at what rate to meaſure the *Expectation* of an Evil, and how many degrees of *actual* Suffering it may be ſet againſt. How then muſt the Fears of Death and Judgment, and the Wrath of God, not for a few Hours only (as in our Saviour's Caſe) but for a whole Eternity fill, employ, divide and diſtract the Capacity of him that is under them, and conſequently not only alloy and diſguſt, but even deaden and make utterly inſipid whatever would otherwiſe be ſavoury and reliſhing in his Life, and diffuſe a general Bitterneſs through all the Enjoyments of it!

Further, So vaſt is the diſproportion between Temporal and Eternal, that the bare Contemplation of Eternity, though without any relation to Happineſs or Miſery, as indifferently conſider'd, with reſpect only to its infinite *Duration*, will bring to Nothing and utterly Annihilate all the Thoughts, and all the Accounts of Time, and make a Man, while he has that immenſe Idea before him, overlook all the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of Ten Thouſand Ages. And how then may we ſuppoſe will the Thoughts and Fears of a *Miſerable* Eternity damp all the Pleaſure, and imbitter all the Comfort of a Man's whole Life! I ſay the Thoughts and Fears of a Miſerable Eternity, which will lie down with him when he goes to Bed, awake with him when he opens his Eyes (if we can ſuppoſe a Man with thoſe Fears at all to have ſhut them) riſe with him when he gets up, be his conſtant Companions

panions all the day, and haunt him wherever he is, even in his last Refuge the *Tavern*, whatever he is about, and with whomsoever he Converses. And how, do we imagine, shall a Man that has such a black Cloud upon his Mind, that carries such a constant Hell about him, enjoy Life, I had almost said *Endure* it, and not chuse Strangling rather than Life, than such a Life, in the midst of which he may truly say that he is in Death. But if he should make a shift to endure it, yet what a Miserable Slavish Life must such a One lead, under what Bondage must he groan, and how Passionately methinks do I hear him cry, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the* Terrors *of this Death!* Which leads me to Consider,

Thirdly and Lastly, *The Remedy both of this Fear and of this Slavery.* The Fear of Death, to resume our former Distinction, is either *Natural* or *Rational.* Against the First of these he must be a bold Empiric that shall undertake to prescribe a Remedy. God has not provided any against the Natural Fear of Death, nor is the thing it self capable of any, and there is great Reason to think that even the Son of God himself was not exempt from it, much less then will he exempt us. But there is a Remedy provided against the Rational Fear of Death. Now this I shall consider,

1. As it is already wrought and effected by Christ, who is here said in the Text to *deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their Life-time Subject to Bondage.*

2. As it is to be further wrought and completed by every Man for himself.

First,

First, *We have a Remedy against the Fear of Death provided for us already by Christ.* This the Apostle plainly intimates where having said, *that the Sting of Death is Sin,* he immediately adds, *But thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* The Victory, but over what? Why over Sin immediately, and by that over Death. *For the Sting of Death is Sin.* In the same Measure and Proportion therefore that Christ has deliver'd us from Sin, in the very same he has also deliver'd us from Death, and from the Fear of Death. But now he has deliver'd us from Sin, both as to the Power of it, and as to the Guilt. From the Power of Sin by his Grace, and from the Guilt of Sin by his Blood. But from neither actually and immediately, but only in Power and Possibility. For when I say that Christ by his Blood has deliver'd us from the guilt of Sin, I would not be so understood as if actual Pardon or Justification were the immediate Effect of Christ's Death, for then no Man need fear *dying*, or take any Care how he *lived*, but only that Christ has made Sin actually Pardonable, and has put all Men into a Capacity of being ditcharg'd from the Guilt of it. And so when I say that Christ by his Grace has deliver'd us from the Power of Sin, I do not mean, neither ought I, that all Men are immediately, and *ipso Facto*, Sanctify'd and made Holy by the Redeeming Grace of Christ, but only that they have a Power and a Capacity given them of becoming so. This therefore being the Measure of our Deliverance from Sin, we must conclude that the same is the Measure of our Deliverance from Death, and that Christ has so far deliver'd us from all reasonable

1 Cor. 15. 57.

Fear of it, as he has put us into a Capacity of avoiding thoſe ſad Conſequences of it, for whoſe ſake alone it is juſtly to be fear'd. And truly they are unworthy of the Redemption of Chriſt who do not think this a ſufficient Deliverance on his Part, and who will not be ſo grateful as to acknowledge it in thoſe Words of the Apoſtle, *Thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* But then, this being thus far only a Capacity, which through default on our ſide may never be brought into act, will oblige us to look further, and to conſider this Remedy.

2dly, *As it is to be farther wrought and Completed by our ſelves.* Here we ſtrike into a large and beaten Road, and may meet with as many Remedies againſt the Fear of Death as there are Preſcriptions for the Cure of an Ague. Every one has his Receipt and his Direction, and a certain Writer, of no ordinary Fame, has, to make ſure Work of it, mix'd the Ingredients, and put them all into one Compoſition. But for my part I know but of one that is Effectual, and that will ſtand the Teſt either of a Sick Bed, or of a Sound Mind, and that is a good Life, a clear Conſcience, an honeſt Heart, and a well-order'd Converſation, to carry the Thoughts of Dying Men about us, and ſo to live before we Dye, as we ſhall wiſh we had when we come to it. This is a ſure Remedy, and that will certainly do the Work, deliver us both from the Fear of Death, and from the Slavery and Bondage that attends that Fear. As for other Remedies there's no depending upon them, for if they ſhould happen to take away our Fear, yet they

Monſieur *Drelincourt.*

they do not take away the *Ground* of it, and ſo prevail not by their own Strength, but by the Weakneſs of thoſe Minds upon whom they Succeed. But a good Life like a proper and true *Specific* ſtrikes at the Cauſe and Bottom of the Diſtemper, and removes not only the Fear it ſelf, but the Ground and Reaſon of it. It diſarms Death of its Sting, whereas other Remedies do at the moſt but Stupify *our Senſe* that we may not feel it. For after all the Arts that ſhall be uſed, and all the fine Conſolations that ſhall be addreſs'd againſt the Fear of Death, it cannot be denied but that Death is truly in it ſelf a terrible and dreadful thing to him whom it finds in an ill State and Courſe of Life, and that 'tis nothing but a Good and Regular one that can make it otherwiſe. If therefore you would not Fear Death, you muſt keep a due diſtance from Sin, which is the Sting of it, and if you would Die with Comfort, you muſt Live with Care.

And how infinitely does it Concern us all to do ſo! Every Man knows that he muſt Infallibly Die one time or other, and when that time comes, he knows withal how different his Sentiments and Apprehenſions of things will then be from what they are now, and particularly with what Strength and Vigour of Application he ſhall then wiſh he had led his Life well, and made good uſe of his time. Which if he has not, he muſt needs know withal what dreadful Agonies and Convulſions of Mind he muſt then be in, and with what dread and horrour he ſhall enter upon Eternity. And therefore if 'twere only to avoid this laſt terrible Plunge, this moſt frightful and uncomfortable *Exit*, it would be of the moſt important Concernment to every Man

to Live well, ſo well that he may Die without any other Agonies than thoſe that are Natural, and may at leaſt have *Hope* in his Death.

But are we concern'd only for this laſt Scene of our Life? Is it of no Conſequence to us to paſs the whole Courſe of it with Comfort and Satisfaction? Is it not the Intereſt and Concern of every Man to enjoy his Life with Pleaſure, as well as to leave it at laſt without Horrour? Is not every Man concern'd to provide that neither the Deſire of Life may imbitter his Death, nor the Fear of Death diſcomfort his Life? Is not Enjoyment of Life the very Life of it? Yes no doubt it is, and 'tis what all Men deſire, and in their ſeveral ways endeavour after. But then why don't they take more Care to live as they Ought, ſince that only can make them as Happy as they deſire? And indeed, Conſidering how certain and unavoidable Death is, how Natural and Neceſſary it is in ſome Meaſure to fear it, and how hard a thing it is to Conquer even the *Rational* Fear of it, and what a Melancholy Aſpect and Diſconſolate Influence this Fear has upon the whole Courſe of a Man's Life, how it damps its Pleaſures, and overcaſts all its Light and Glory, and that a good Life is the only ſure Antidote againſt this Fear with which no tolerable Enjoyment of Life can conſiſt, I ſay conſidering theſe things, one would think that every reflecting Man at leaſt, if 'twere only to enjoy Life while he has it, ſhould apply himſelf to the ſerious Study and Practice of Religion, and never content himſelf till by living better and better, and riſing higher and higher, he has at length attain'd to ſuch a degree of Chriſtian Piety, as will ſet him above the Fear of Death. For the ſhort is this, as long as Men fear Death,

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they will have no tolerable Enjoyment of Life, and as long as they lead ill Lives they will be under a neceſſity of fearing Death, and therefore as long as they lead ill Lives they will lead very unhappy and uneaſy Lives, will enjoy neither themſelves nor their Friends, neither Solitude nor Company, neither Buſineſs nor Diverſion, will be too much concern'd for the Future to be able to reliſh the Preſent; in one word, will *through Fear of Death be all their Life-time Subject to Bondage.* Which, if it cannot be avoided, is the Life of a *Slave* only, but if it can, 'tis the Life of a *Fool.*

Now to God the Father, &c.

A Diſcourſe Concerning the Extent of Chriſt's Satisfaction.

MAT. iij. 17.

This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

THE Great Queſtion among the Philoſophers was concerning the *Origin* of Evil, whence and how it came into the World, but it would have been a more concerning Inquiry to have lookt about for a Cure of it, how the Power of Sin in us might be deſtroy'd, and how the Guilt of it might be expiated. Concerning the firſt of theſe, Philoſophy neither did nor could go any further than certain Moral Rules and Preſcriptions, the World having then no Notion, but what was very Confuſe, either of the Nature or of the Neceſſity of Divine *Grace*. And as to the Latter, though their early and general Practice of Sacrificing, and the great Streſs they laid upon that Way of Worſhip ſeem to imply that they had ſome Notion of the Vindictive Juſtice of God, and that ſome Atonement or other was neceſſary to appeaſe it, yet in this they came ſhort (which was al-

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ſo the Defect of the *Jewiſh* Religion) that the Sacrifices with which they fatted their Altars, were infinitely diſproportionate both to the God to whom, and to the End and Purpoſe for which they were offer'd, and ſo (as the Author to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks) *could never make the Commers thereunto Perfect*, it being impoſſible, as the ſame inſpired Pen aſſures us, that the *Blood of Bulls and Goats ſhould take away Sins.*

The World had ever ſome ſecret Senſe of the Neceſſity of an Atonement by Sacrifice to expiate for their Sins, but was utterly at a loſs what to offer. *Wherewithal ſhall I come before the Lord*, is a Queſtion that the Light of Nature might prompt a Man to move, but to which it could never return a proper Anſwer. And well may Man be at a ſtand to find out a Sacrifice worthy of God, when the whole Creation will not ſuffice for it. Nothing is worthy of God but God himſelf, and he muſt either want Satisfaction, or a Divine Perſon muſt give it. The Sacrifices of the Heathen and of the Jews, though of different Value and Efficacy, had yet both this Common Defect that they could not avail to a final and thorough expiation of any one Sin, and though God be ſometimes ſaid to ſmell a ſweet Savour in the latter of theſe, and to accept them among other Inſtances of Religious Homage, yet he was ſo far from being fully ſatisfy'd by them, or acquieſcing in them, that even while he commanded them as *Services*, he refuſed them as *Satisfaction. Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings thou would'ſt not, then ſaid I, Lo, I come.* His own Beloved Son was the only Oblation that could deſerve the Name of a *Sacrifice* by fully anſwering the Demands of his Juſtice, and withal the only *Prieſt*

that was worthy to offer it, and in him it is that God after so many ineffectual Slaughters, so many *Vain Oblations*, declares himself at length fully satisfy'd and intirely pleased, and that by a Solemn Voice from Heaven, *This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*

The Words are that Illustrious Testimony given by God the Father concerning his Son Jesus Christ at two very remarkable Times, First at his Baptism in the River *Jordan*, and again at his Transfiguration upon Mount *Tabor*, where, as says Saint *Peter*, *He receiv'd from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* St *Peter* concludes from hence the certainty of the Christian Faith, of that Gospel which the Apostles Preach't, and indeed it is a sufficient Argument of it, as proving both that Christ was the Son of God, the true Messiah that was to come into the World, and that God was fully satisfy'd in his Person and in his Undertaking, which are the two great Fundamentals of Christianity. The first of these lies in the former Clause of the Text, *This is my Beloved Son*, the Second in the latter, *in whom I am well pleased*; that is, whom I not only love and delight in as to his Person, but also perfectly accept as Mediator to satisfy my Justice for the Sin of Man, and for whose Sake I am reconciled to him, and ready to bestow both Grace and Glory upon him. So that here are two very great Subjects of Discourse that do arise from the Words, the former part of which might give me Occasion to assert the Messiahship of Christ, in opposition to

2 *Pet.* 1. 17.

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the *Jews*, who do not acknowledge it, and the Latter to give an Account of his Satisfaction in opposition to some Christians who either *Deny*, or *Misconceive* it. The former of these has been already so abundantly establish'd against the *Jews* by Christian Writers, that I think I need not ingage in it. I shall therefore dismiss it with this short Remark, That since there cannot be a greater attestation of the Truth of any Prophet's Mission than an immediate Voice from Heaven, had not Christ really been what he pretended to be, 'tis not conceivable that God who is a God of Truth would have honour'd him with such a Testimony. If we could imagin that he would have concurr'd with him in his Mighty Works upon *Earth*, yet sure we cannot that he would thus Miraculously testify of him from *Heaven*, had he been an Impostor. A Testimony so Compendious and so Decisive, that it both excells and supersedes all others, whether Humane or Divine. And accordingly we find that our Saviour appeals to this as his greatest Credential. *If I bear witness of my self*, says he, *my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not Testimony from Man. I have greater witness than that of John.* And here he mentions two, His Miracles, and his Father's Attestation. *The works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me, and the Father himself which hath sent me hath born witness of me*; truly indeed and sufficiently by the Voice of his Prophets, which yet breath'd in the Writings of the Old Testament, but never so remarkably and immediately as by his

Joh. 5. 31.

his own Voice from Heaven, when he said, *This is my Beloved Son.* And what need we any further Witness of the truth of our Saviour's Mission, when we have one from Heaven that expresly assures the World that he was the Beloved Son of God, which he could not have been had he been a Seducer, since the God of Truth cannot in any wise be a *Lover* of Imposture and Deceit.

Thus much therefore shall suffice concerning the Truth of our Saviour's Mission, gather'd from the former Clause of the Text, *This is my Beloved Son.* Whence I proceed to the Consideration of his Satisfaction express'd in these Words, *in whom I am well pleas'd.* This Complacency which God the Father here expresses in his Son Jesus Christ, though truly applicable, is not I presume to be confined to his own Person, but to be extended to others for his sake, and upon his Account, and if we will admit the Hypothesis of a very extraordinary Pen, it may be extended to all the Works of God, which according to our Author, could neither have been at first Created, nor could afterwards subsist but only with respect to Jesus Christ, whose Incarnation therefore was (upon this supposition) Necessary, if 'twere only by the Dignity of his Person to Sanctifie the Works of God, and render them truly worthy of their Author. As if all that Complacency which God took in the Works of his Hands, when upon a review he pronounc'd them Good, were founded, not upon their own proper work, (for as such they were not worthy of the Action whereby they were produced) but upon that Relation which they bore

Traite de la Nature et de la Grace.

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to Jesus Christ, in whom only they become acceptable to God, and were it not for whose sake they could neither have been at first, nor would now any longer be. Which Notion, I must confess, seems mightily to be favour'd by all those Places of Scripture (and they indeed are many) which represent all things as Made by and for Jesus Christ, and as having also their Subsistence in and by him. But leaving this Notion to stand or fall by its own Measures (for I shall not wade so far out of my depth as to determine any thing in so nice a Matter) I shall chuse rather to understand the Complacency in the Text, as St. *Peter* seems to do, in reference to Man only, and that not consider'd as a Creature, but as a Sinner, and as by his Sin estranged from, and ingaged in a State of Enmity with God, who however he might at first delight in him, even without respect to Christ, before he had defaced that Divine Image which he had graven upon him, yet he cannot *Now be pleas'd* with him but in his Son. So that *well pleased* here being supposed to relate to Man as a *Sinner* will signify the same as *Reconciled*, and when God says, *This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*, it comes to as much as if he had said, This is He whom I Constitute and Accept as Mediator, to satisfy my Justice for the Sin of Man, and to work a Reconciliation betwixt us, and for whose sake I am, and declare my self fully Reconciled to him. According as 'tis said, that *he has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*, and again, that *he has Made us accepted in the Beloved*. 2 Cor. 5. 18. Eph. 1. 6.

The thing therefore that will hence offer it self to our present Consideration, is, the Satisfaction of

of Christ, and that Reconciliation wrought by him between God and Man. Which I shall not consider as to the *Truth* of it, nor as to the *Necessity* of it (having nothing to add to what has been already said by our many Learned Anti-Socinian Writers upon these two Heads) but only as to the *Nature* and *Extent* of it, intending to rectify some popular and dangerous Mistakes about it, by giving a clear and exact State of this Question, *viz.* How far Christ has satisfy'd for us, or how far, and in what sense God is said here to be pleased with us, or reconciled to us in his Son.

This is what I intend; only I have one Remarque to make upon the two other Heads before I proceed to treat of this, which is, that whereas the Assertors of Christ's Satisfaction divide themselves into two sorts, some holding only the *Truth* of it, and others standing also for the *Necessity* of it, this seems to me a very unnecessary Distinction, and such as at long run will wind up into one Bottom. Those that stand for the Necessity of Satisfaction, mean that there is something in the Nature of God that requires that Sin should not go wholly unpunish'd, and that therefore if God will forgive it to the Sinner, he is Obliged to punish it in some other Person; so that God cannot forgive Sin without some Valuable Consideration or Satisfaction made for the breach of his Laws. To this, those who assert only the Truth of it without the Necessity, return, that God might, if he had so pleased, have remitted Sin *gratis*, without any Satisfaction, only in his *Wisdom* he did not think *fit* to do it. And herein they both think and are thought to Contradict each other, and great Heats

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and Contentions have been Occasion'd by this appearance of Opposition. But in my Opinion the difference between them is not so great as to despair of Accommodation, and I believe they are nearer to one another than they think they are. For when those of the *Vindictive* way say that God could not forgive Sin without Satisfaction, they do not mean as to a *Physical*, but as to a *Moral* Power, not that he could not do it, *Absolutely* speaking, but that he could not *Hypothetically* speaking, as a Being acting according to certain immutable Measures of Essential Perfection, in the same Sense, as when we say God cannot Lie, which is not at all contradicted by saying that God could do it if he pleased, *Absolutely speaking*, since in that Sense the First do not say he could not, but only that he could not *Hypothetically* speaking, as acting according to the Moral Perfection of his Nature. And do not those of the other side in effect confess the same when they say that God though he might have done it if he had pleased, yet did not, all things consider'd, think *fit* in his Wisdom *to* do it? For need any thing be more impossible than what an Infinitely Wise Being does not think fit to do? And may not such a perfect Agent be very well said not to be able to do whatever he cannot do in Wisdom? There is therefore thus far no Contradiction One says, God could not Pardon Sin, Morally speaking, without Satisfaction, which the other does not affirm; and the other says he could do it, Physically speaking, which the other does not deny. So that here is no Affirmation and Negation in respect of the same, and consequently thus far no Opposition. I say thus far, for though both agree

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in this that God might Absolutely do it, and that Hypothetically he could not, *i. e.* supposing him to act Consistently with the Moral Perfections of his Nature, yet when they come to explain themselves upon this last part, they seem to go off from one another again, and to strike into two different Roads, which yet I believe will be found to meet in one. Both agree in this, that God could not Pardon Sin without Satisfaction, all things consider'd, and supposing him to act according to the Perfection of his Nature, and that therefore upon the whole matter, Satisfaction was Necessary: Only here starts up a Nicety, One resolving the Reason of this into the *Justice* of God, and the Other into his *Wisdom*. He might have done it, say those of the latter way, if he had pleased; but in Wisdom he did not think fit to do it after a full Consideration of things. But whatever difference there may be in the Formal Reasons of *Justice* and *Wisdom* abstractedly consider'd, yet certainly there can be little or none in the Objects of them as they come under the consideration of an Infinitely Perfect Being. For that which an Infinitely Wise Being proposing the Greatest and Noblest Ends, and prosecuting them by the aptest Means, and in every respect acting by the best Measures does not after all think fit to do, will be as hardly reconciled to Justice as it is to Wisdom. For if we will compare our Expressions with our Notions of things, what can we possibly mean by God's thinking a thing not fit to be done, or for him to do, but only that it is not a proper Means in order to the great Ends which he proposes, his own Glory, and the good of the Universal System, that it is not fit according to the Order of things and the true Interest of the

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Reasonable World that such a thing should be, and what is this in other Words, but that it is not just or equitable? So then what God cannnot Wisely do, he cannot Justly do, and for God in his Wisdom not to think a thing fit to be done, will come to the same as not to think it Just or Equitable to be done: For what is not, all things consider'd, fit to be done, *Ought* not to be done; and, what ought not to be done, it can never be just to do. And then since God did not in Wisdom think fit to Pardon Sin without Satisfaction, the result will be, that he did not think it a just thing to do it, and consequently could no more do it in *Justice* than he could in *Wisdom*. So that in all the seeming diversity of Opinion, and after all the fierce Contention about this Matter, the same thing is at length intended, and those *Prudential Reasons* so mightily talkt of, and upon which so great stress is laid by some, resolve at last into Reasons of *Justice*. For if God did not in Wisdom think fit to pardon Sin without the Satisfaction of Christ, what is this, but that he saw that such a way of Pardoning Sin was not a fit Means to that end he proposed to himself in the Government of the World: And what can be more unjust in a Governour, than to do any thing against the End of Government? The Result then of the whole will be, that in what sense soever God may be said to Pardon Sin *Freely*, the Satisfaction of Christ after all, is as Necessary to the Remission of Sin, as that God should be *Wise* and *Just*, which I think is Necessity enough, and enough to accommodate this Great Debate.

But after all, those that hold the Truth of Christ's Satisfaction, must, in spite of all their willingness to keep up a Distinction, come over to those that hold

hold the Neceſſity of it. For beſides that 'tis not Conceivable how ſuch an extraordinary Tranſaction as the Suffering of the Son of God for the Redemption of a Sinful World ſhould be true, if it had not been Neceſſary, it may further be conſider'd that if it be true *de facto* that Chriſt did Satisfy, then it muſt be as true that Satisfaction was requir'd, (for where nothing is due, nothing can be paid) and if required, then there could be no Remiſſion without it, which is as much as to ſay it was Neceſſary. So that the Truth of Chriſt's Satisfaction being once granted, its own Nature, without being beholden to other Arguments, will infer the Neceſſity of it, which therefore upon what Account thoſe ſhould deny who grant the Truth of it (unleſs it be to gratify the *Sociniane* by giving up as much of the Cauſe as they poſſibly can) I do not underſtand. But this I think to be a very dangerous Complement, and ſuch as will not fail to betray the Cauſe, unleſs our Adverſaries pleaſe to be ſo Civil too as not to take the Advantage. I ſhall not Charge any with ſuch an inſidious deſign as to intend to betray that Cauſe which they pretend to Aſſert, but this I will be bold to ſay, that for my own part I ſhould not undertake to Diſpute with a *Socinian* upon that Conceſſion, being verily perſwaded that if I once granted him that the Satisfaction of Chriſt was not *Neceſſary*, it muſt be *his* Fault if he did not force me to confeſs that it was not *True*.

But not to inſiſt any longer upon this Occaſional Remark concerning the *Truth* and the *Neceſſity* of the Satisfaction of Chriſt (which I here conſider not according to their abſolute and ſeparate Natures, but only as they relate to each other) I

pass now to State the Extent of it, by shewing how far Christ has satisfy'd for us, or how far and in what Sense God is said here to be pleased with us, or reconciled to us in his Son. *This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Well pleased sounds very high, and can import no less than a full and thorough Satisfaction, that we are fully and perfectly reconciled to God in Jesus Christ. And so the Scripture every where expresses it. In Conformity to which our Church says in the Prayer of Consecration, speaking concerning the Death of Christ upon the Cross, that *he made there by his one Oblation of himself once offer'd, a full, perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World.* Sufficient no doubt as far as was intended; but the great Question is how far or to what degree that was? Upon the right Resolution of which Question the general Idea of *Practical Christianity* will in great Measure depend.

Some extend the Satisfaction of Christ so far as to make actual Pardon the immediate Effect of it, as if we were *ipso facto* deliver'd by his Dying for us, which is what they understand by the *Redemption* of the World. But this at first view appears to be a false Hypothesis, because then as many would be Pardon'd as Christ died for, that is all Men, and that without any thing to be done by way of Condition on their part, which would at one blow dissolve all the Obligations of Good Life, and intirely defeat the *Great Mistery* of *Godliness*. But because this Mistake is founded upon another concerning the Sufferings of Christ, whom these Men will have to have undergone all the Punishment that was due to our Sins, and so in the very extremity of the Notion to have paid the *Last Farthing*

for us, I think it Necessary to consider a little the Nature of Christ's Sufferings, and that the rather because till it be known what that was which Christ Suffer'd *for* us, we cannot well determine what the Advantage is which thence accrues *to* us.

There are (as I have already hinted) who thinking they can never enough Exalt the Passion of Christ, will have him to have Suffer'd, not only for us, and in our Room, but the very self-same that we were to have done, and deserv'd to do, and so to have paid a rigid Satisfaction to the Divine Justice. But it is evident that Christ neither did nor could thus Suffer for us. That he *did* not is plain because his Sufferings were *Temporary*, whereas ours ought to have been *Eternal*. And that he *could* not is as plain, not only from his incapacity of suffering Damnation, which in the Nature of it involves Desperation; but also because had his Sufferings been in all other respects never so much the same with ours, yet their being undergone not by us, but by another in our Room, was enough to hinder what he underwent from being the very same that the Law required. For (to use the Words of a very Learned Person upon this Occasion) *that takes no notice of any other than the Persons who had Sinn'd, and if a Mediator could have paid the same, the Original Law must have been Disjunctive*, viz. *that either the Offender must Suffer, or another for him. But then the Gospel had not been the bringing in of a Better Covenant, but a performance of the old.* The Force of which comes to this, that since the Original Law did not admit of a Mediator (as not being Disjunctive) though we should suppose the Punishment of Christ to have been

Reason of the Sufferings of Christ.

been otherwise never so much the same with what we were to have undergone, yet its not being undergone by us but by another for us, the very *Commutatio Personæ* was enough to make it to be a Punishment of a different Nature from that which was required by the Law, whereof the very admission of a Mediator was a Relaxation, and indeed the First Act of God's Indulgence whereby he departed from the Rigour of the Legal Sentence, which yet could not be said to be *Moderated* if Christ had so rigorously satisfy'd the Demands of it as some Imagine. Besides that if he had done so, God could not have *refused* such a Satisfaction, consequently Pardon and Justification must have follow'd upon it *ipso facto*, immediately. Nor could our Deliverance have been suspended (as we see it is) upon any Conditions; nor lastly could God have forgiven us any thing as of *Grace*. All which being true Consequences, but false Propositions, 'tis most unquestionably certain that Christ did not suffer that very Punishment which the Law required, and which, for any Provision therein made to the contrary ought to have been inflicted.

If it be ask't what it was then which he suffered? I answer, that if the Question be concerning the precise Quality and Quantity of the Punishment, I must profess Ingenuously that I cannot tell. What the Ingredients of his Bitter Cup were, *God* that *mix'd* them, and *himself* that *drank* them only know, though we have reason to think that it was no ordinary Infliction that could overwhelm his Soul with such a Flood of Sorrow, dissolve his Body into a Sweat of Blood, and at last extort that strange Exclamation from him, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* More particular I dare

not be, nor is it neceſſary I ſhould, it being ſufficient for the preſent purpoſe to conclude that whatever his Sufferings were they were not the very ſame that the Law required from the Tranſgreſſors of it, but only ſomething that in a *Judicial* Eſtimation was *Equivalent* to that Puniſhment which was due from them. He is ſaid indeed to have *born our Griefs*, and *carried our Sorrows*, *Iſa.* 53. 4. not that they were the very ſame that we deſerv'd (for we deſerv d Greater) but only ſuch as were undertaken upon our Account, would anſwer the Demands of Juſtice, and all the Reaſons and Ends of Puniſhment full as well, and were truly Equivalent to them; what was wanting in the Duration or Degree of them being abundantly ſupplied from the Quality and Dignity of the *Patient*, whoſe Divinity gave Infinite value to his otherwiſe Finite and Momentary Sufferings, and made his Blood Infinitely more Precious than the Richeſt Treaſures. According to what Saint *Peter* ſays of it, 1 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. *that we were not redeemed with Corruptible things as Silver or Gold, but with the* Precious *Blood of Jeſus Chriſt.*

But as *Precious* as it was, it was not the very thing that the Law required, but a *Vicarious* Puniſhment, not a rigid Satisfaction, but an *Equivalency.* From whence it will follow that it was abſolutely *Refuſable*, all Diſpenſation being of Liberty, not of Neceſſity. And ſince it was refuſable, then as God might not have admitted it, ſo when he did, it was ſtill at his Pleaſure how far he would do ſo, and with what Conditions he would have it qualify'd. For this is moſt certain that what God might wholly have refuſed, he might qualify and limit as he pleaſed. Whence we may further conclude

clude that actual Remission could not be the *Necessary* Effect of Christ's Satisfaction, nay, that it could have no Necessary Effect in respect of *us*, but that as to *us* it was all over Arbitrary, and did wholly depend upon the good Pleasure of God. I say as to *us*. For indeed in respect of *God* it had *One* Necessary and Inseparable Effect, which was that he might now shew Mercy if he pleased, and that he had it now in his Power (I speak of a *Moral* not Physical Power) to Forgive Sin, all Bars and Impediments being now removed out of the way, which either from his Justice or Wisdom might be opposed against it. God therefore was now at full Liberty and had a sufficient Moral Ability to shew Mercy, but whether he would or no, and upon what Terms, must still depend upon his own Will and Pleasure. For since Christ satisfy'd by his Sufferings, and since those Sufferings were absolutely refusable, as not being the very same which the Law demanded, it must be that his Satisfaction, which was founded upon those Sufferings, must be as refusable too, and if admitted, must owe its Success to the gracious Acceptance of God, whose just Right accordingly it was to order its Effect, and to determine as he saw fit, how far the Benefit of it should extend. From all which we may gather this Proposition which may serve as a General Measure in order to the resolution of our present Question, *That the Satisfaction of Christ has, as to* us, *no other Effect than what it pleased God it should have*, or, *That it extends no further than 'twas the Will and Pleasure of God it should Extend.*

We have therefore now only to Consider what the *Will* and *Pleasure* of God was in this matter.

Now to open us a Passage into this we have a Double Key.

1. By Considering what the End and Design of Christ was in his Undertaking for us.
2. What the Scripture (wherein is Reveal'd the *Will* of God) expresly makes to be the Effect of that Undertaking.

And First, There can be no better way to Measure the Extent of Christ's Undertaking for us, than to Consider what was his End in that Undertaking, since the End of any Performance is that which must prescribe bounds to all that is done in it. This is Clear. Now as to the End of Christ's Undertaking we need not put our selves upon any Conjectural Reasonings or Divinations, since the Scripture is plain and expres that it was for the Abolishment of Sin, and for the Promotion and Improvement of Righteousnes and true Holines. So St. *John* expresly, *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* 1 Joh. 3. 8. Which is equally confirm'd by the Authority of St. *Paul*, who tells us, that *he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.* 2 Cor. 5. 15. And again, that *he gave himself for our Sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil World.* Gal. 1. 4. And again, that *Christ gave himself for his Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and that he might present it unto himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or* Eph. 5. 25, 26, 27. *any*

any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. And again, if it be possible, more fully and clearly, *Tit.* 2. 14. that *he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good works.* I need alledge no more Scriptures, since by these it undeniably appears that the End of Christ's Undertaking for us was the Promotion of Holiness, but if you will have a Testimony from his own Mouth, he himself tells us (who to be sure understood the true design of his coming into the World) that *he came to call Sinners to Repentance.* Well if so, then the Effect of Christ's Satisfaction must be extended no further than it may serve to this End, no further than it may tend to the incouragement and furtherance of *Repentance.* Whenever it is made to cross this End 'tis a sure sign that 'tis stated amiss. Now to this there are two hindrances. 1. When it is in *Vain.* 2. When it is *Needless.* When either Pardon of Sin cannot be had with it, or when it may be had without it. Both which are equal as well as sufficient Discouragements to Repentance. Now the First of these was the Condition we were left in by our falling into Sin, and in which the Mercy and Grace of God found us. Though we could have Repented, it would have been in Vain, and to no purpose, Repentance alone without Satisfaction not being sufficient for Pardon. Man therefore in this Supposition had no reason to Repent, and consequently would not endeavour it, being destitute of *Motive* as well as of *Power.* Which was therefore a State utterly desperate, much like that of Hell, wholly forsaken of all Motives to Goodness, and Seal'd up and Condemn'd to all Wickedness. Here there-

fore was extreme need of a *Deliverer*. But then if this Deliverer to Remedy the distress of this State should interpose so far as to carry it to the other extreme, by making our Repentance as much Needless by his Mediation, as without it, it would have been in Vain, this would equally Cross and Defeat the Ends of Holiness, and Consequently be an equal Contradiction to his Great Design. 'Tis necessary therefore to fix the Effect of Christ's Satisfaction between these two. We must suppose him to have done so much for us that Repentance may no longer be in Vain, and yet not so much as on the other hand to make it needless. But now this cannot be by supposing Actual Pardon to be the immediate Result of Christ's Satisfaction, for then 'tis visible that Repentance would be altogether Needless, as every Means is when the End is already obtain'd. It must be therefore only a *Capacity* of Pardon; not an absolute and remote Capacity (for that we had before, and without the help of a Mediator) but a Capacity of Pardon upon *Repentance*, which is enough that Repentance may not be in vain, and yet not so much as to make it needless. And when the Case is brought to this, the great Interest of Holiness (which I have shewn to be the End of Christ's Undertaking) is justly and duely serv'd, there being then all the Reason and Incouragement to Repentance that both the *Successfulness* and the *Necessity* of the thing can give. And in this Order and Adjustment of things I suppose to consist the true *Mystery of Godliness*. I conclude therefore that since the End of Christ's Undertaking as Mediator was the Promotion of Repentance, and since the Extent of it must be such as Comports with that End, and since that End cannot

not be serv'd but by stating the Effect of his Satisfaction between the two foremention'd Extremes, the true Effect of Christ's Satisfaction was to put us *into a Pardonable* State, that whereas before without the Mediation of Christ, Repentance would not be available to Pardon, now with it it should. Not that we might be pardon'd without it, but only that we might be pardon'd with it. Less than this would have been short of a Deliverance, and more would have been a certain Frustration of his Great End. I conclude therefore that this was the very precise thing that he did for us, to put us into a Capacity of Pardon, into a pardonable State; that he did so much for us that Repentance might not be in Vain, and that he did no more that it might not be Needless.

But the Truth of this Account will appear Secondly, by Scripture, as well as from the End and Design of our Lord's Undertaking and Mediation for us. I argue from all those Scriptures which expressly suspend our Actual Pardon and Complete Reconciliation with God upon Repentance. For if Actual Pardon be suspended upon Repentance (and I think I need not bring Quotations to prove that it is) then 'tis most certain that Actual Pardon is not the immediate Fruit and Effect of Christs Satisfaction (since that cannot be the *immediate* Effect of any thing which does not follow but by the *Mediation* of certain after Conditions) and if so, then Christ by his Satisfaction cannot be supposed to have done more for us than to make Sin *Pardonable*, or to put us into a Capacity of being pardon'd upon Repentance. If he had done more, our Pardon could not have been suspended upon that Condition; but it is suspended upon that Condition,

whence

whence I justly conclude that he did no more. And was not that enough? What, would Men have Christ undertake so far for them that they might be pardon'd *without* Repentance? Is it not a sufficient Redemption to be pardon'd *with* it, to have it available? Yes certainly, 'tis more than was indulged to the *Angels* that Sinn'd, and more than the Tenour of the *Law* allows to *Man*, and he is not worthy to have a part in the Redemption of Christ who does not think it sufficient. I conclude therefore that for Christ to have satisfied for us and redeem'd us is only to have procured for us a Possibility of Pardon by Repentance, and for God to be reconciled to us in and through his Son, is for his sake to admit us into the very next Capacity of Pardon; being ready to bestow it upon us immediately upon our turning from Sin to him and his Service. So that all those places of Scripture which speak of our being *reconciled* to God by Christ, of our being *heal'd* by his Stripes, of our being *Redeem'd* and *Justify'd* by his Blood, and of having through it *Forgiveness* of Sins and the like, must and ought to be understood not of *Actual Remission* (as they seem to sound, and as they are taken by some) but of a *Remissibility* or *State* of Pardon. In which Sense we are also to understand that Article of our Creed concerning *Forgiveness* of *Sins*. Wherein we profess to believe, not that Sin is already pardon'd by the Death of Christ (for I know not what Foundation we have for such a Belief) but that he has by the Merit of his Cross, open'd a way for Pardon and Reconciliation, made them possible and attainable by Repentance. So that Sin is said to be pardon'd in as much as 'tis made *Pardonable* by the Merit and Satisfaction of Christ,

Christ, which is all the Reconciliation that on his part is wrought for us.

But what, is there then a two-fold Reconciliation, one on Christ's part, and another on ours? Yes, and 'tis for want of distinguishing these, or at least due attention to this Distinction that all the Errour and Confusion in this Matter has been Occasion'd. There is certainly a twofold Reconciliation, or, if you will, a twofold Degree of it. The First is previous to our Repentance, and indeed wholly preventive of any thing we can do; the Second follows it, and is grounded upon it. That which is previous to Repentance consists in a bare Remissibility of Sin, that which follows it consists in the full and actual Remission of it. The First of these is wholly Absolute and Inconditionate, (there being nothing required of us to make sin pardonable to us) the Second is suspended upon Conditions, till the performance of which, Sin, though Pardonable, is not however actually pardon'd. In the first of these we are wholly *Passive* and *unconcerned*, it being all over the pure Work of our Redeemer, in the Second we are Active, and must come in for a part. Which makes me call one of these a Reconciliation on Christ's Part, and the other a Reconciliation on ours. Nor is this Distinction without Foundation in Scripture, wherein there is express mention of each part of it. That of St. *Paul* to the *Romans*, Rom. 5. 8, 9. *God commendeth his Love towards us in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us, much more then being justified by his Blood we shall be saved from Wrath through him*, is quoted by a Learned Person to this Purpose, who will have the former Clause to refer to the First

Limbroch Theolog. Christiana. p. 273.

Degree

Degree of Reconciliation, and the latter to the Second. But I think he is utterly Mistaken. For 'tis plain that the Expression of *being justified by his Blood*, being immediately opposed to that state of Enmity we were in, antecedently to the Mediation of Christ, can reach no farther than to the next Degree above it, and consequently can only signify the First and general Reconciliation, that state of Remissibility into which we were all put by the Blood of Christ, which is also upon other Grounds shewn to be the Sense of the Place by the Learned Doctor *Hammond* in his Annotations upon it. But I am not concern'd for the Loss of this Place, since there are two others so full and express to the purpose that there will be no miss of its Service. The First is that remarkable one of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19, 20. *All things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the Ministry of Reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of Reconciliation. Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God.* Here is a plain Account of a double Reconciliation, one on God's part, that he was reconciling the World to himself in Christ, and the other on our part, in that we are intreated to be reconciled to God. Which must needs be a Reconciliation distinct from the Former, because 'tis made the Subject of Perswasion and Entreaty, and consequently supposed to be matter of Contingency and uncertainty, neither of which can be applied to our Reconciliation as wrought by Christ. So again St. *John* speaks of the First Re-

conciliation,

conciliation, that on Christ's part, when he says, 1 *Joh.* 2. 2. *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but for the Sins of the whole World.* The universality of which Character shews it plainly to be meant of the First Reconciliation resulting immediately from the Death and Satisfaction of Christ. The Second he respects when he says in another place, 1 *Joh.* 1. 7. that *if we walk in the Light as he is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son Cleanses us from all Sin.* The *Conditionality* of which shews it as truely to be meant of the Second Reconciliation, as the other part by its *Universality* is Necessarily referr'd to the First. From the Mouth therefore of these two Witnesses St. *Paul* and St. *John*, (not to Summon in any more) I think here is sufficient Evidence to conclude for a twofold Reconciliation, one on Christ's part, and another on ours; and moreover, that that on Christ's part does not consist in Actual Pardon or Justification, but only in laying the Ground and Foundation of it, in procuring for us not the Possession of it, but the Capacity and Possibility, which is then reduced to Act, and made Complete, when we put the Conditions upon which it is suspended, when we comply with those terms upon which it was purchased by his *Blood*, and is offer'd to us in his *Gospel*. And in this I think I have given a just and clear Account of the Extent of Christ's Satisfaction, and shewn in what Sense, and how far God may be said to be Reconciled to us, or Pleased with us in his Son; that Beloved Son in whom he declares himself well pleased, or thoroughly pacify'd, to the greatest degree of Satisfaction and Acquiescence.

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From the foregoing Considerations concerning the true Extent of the Satisfaction of Christ, the first Improvement that may be made, is, that they furnish us with a certain Measure whereby to give a decisive Sentence in that great (though needless) Controversie about *Justification by Works*. I shall not at present ingage in the Debate, having already laid down such Principles upon which the true Issue of it will depend For (in short) if all that Christ as *Satisfying* has done for us be only to instate us in a Capacity of Pardon, then 'tis most certain that we are to do all the rest, all that is further Necessary to make this Pardon Perfect and Complete. If Christ's part reaches no further than a *Capacity*, then the *Actuality* of this Capacity must depend upon our doing the Conditions required, and then to Dispute whether Repentance be Necessary to Justification when this Justification is supposed not to be the immediate Effect of Christ's Death, but to be suspended upon Repentance as the Condition of it, seems to me such an idle, not to say *blundering* Controversie, that one would think the World were hard put to't for something to keep them awake, when this should be made a Question.

Again, We may also upon these Measures return a Clear and Exact Answer to that Great *Socinian* Objection, that Christ could not die to Reconcile us to God because God was Reconciled to us before, as being supposed already so to love the World as to send his only Son to be our Saviour. For the Reconciliation wrought by Christ, being, as we have stated it, supposed to consist in a Remissibility of Sin upon Repentance, 'tis plain that God was not *so* Reconciled to us before. For as this

this is a Degree of Reconciliation less than that Actual Pardon which is obtain'd by Repentance, so 'tis more than that General Kindness and Good Will which God had for us as Creatures, and which moved him to send his Son to Die for us. To form a clear Idea of this Matter, we need only distinguish of a Threefold Degree in the Love of God. One Degree whereby he loved us as Creatures, concerning which St. *John*, *God so loved the World*, &c. Another Degree whereby he stood yet more kindly affected towards us as initiated in a Capacity of Pardon by the Satisfaction of his Son. And a Third as actually Pardon'd, and fully Reconciled to him by being qualify'd according to the Conditions required to that Purpose. Now as the Third of these is greater than the Second, so the Second (which we suppose to be the Effect of Christ's Death) is as much greater than the First. And since this Second Degree does not Commence till after the Satisfaction of Christ, as the Third does not till after the Conditions are perform'd, it is plain that this Second Degree of Love, which is the Effect of the Death of Christ, is not the same with that which was the Impulsive Cause of it, and consequently that the Death of Christ was not (as the *Socinian* pretends) unnecessary to procure it.

The last Improvement I shall make of this Discourse, is, that since Christ has so far undertaken for us, as to make way for Second Thoughts, by procuring for us a Capacity of Pardon upon Terms worthy of his Wisdom, Justice and Holiness, since he has retriev'd our once desperate Fortune, set up again our Broken and *Bankrupt* Nature, put Heaven once more in our Reach, removed the Guardian Sword from the Gate of Paradise, and brought

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us so nigh to the Kingdom of God, that there wants nothing but our contributing our part, that we may enter and take Possession of it. I say, that since our Saviour Christ has done all this for us, we would Learn to admire the Grace and Goodness of God towards us, thankfully receive so inestimable a Benefit, and also faithfully endeavour to fulfil the Conditions required on our part, in order to the Completion of our Happiness. That so from a *Capacity* of Pardon we may pass on to the *Actual* Possession of it, that our Peace and Reconciliation with God may be on both sides Perfect and Intire, that he may Delight and be Satisfy'd *in* us, as well as *for* us, and may say of every one of us as he did of him that undertook for us, *This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* Amen.

A Dis-

A Diſcourſe Concerning Practical Atheiſm.

TIT. j. 16.

They profeſs that they know God, but in Works they deny him.

THE true Character of a *Practical Atheiſt*, who does not, as the Notional one, expreſly deny the Being of God and ridicule the Belief of him, who does not Charge them with Weakneſs that plead for his Exiſtence, and them yet with greater that ſerve him, and live under an aweful Senſe of him, expoſe the Myſteries of Faith as Impoſſibilities, and the Rule of it as a mere Human Invention, deride the Notion of an after State as the Dreams of the Night, and repreſent Heaven and Hell as imaginary Scenes, and ſo with one Breath blow away all Religion as the Trick and Device of the crafty, and the vain Amuſement of Eaſy and Credulous Spirits. No, he profeſſes to believe that there is a God, and ſeems concern'd that others ſhould believe it too, and accordingly you ſhall often hear him Diſcourſe of the Reaſonableneſs of ſuch a Belief, and if he has Learning to his Zeal, you ſhall have him it may be write Books for the proof of a Deity,

and to ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of Atheiſm, all along Lamenting and Complaining that there ſhould be any occaſion for it, and ſometimes in the height and fulneſs of his Zeal, (ſo ſtrongly is the Man perſwaded himſelf) queſtioning whether there be anyſuch thing as a real Atheiſt in the World. Nay, he profeſſes not only to Believe a God, but to *Know* him; to be ſo well acquainted with his Nature and with his Will, with his Works and with his Ways, nay, and with his very Decrees, as if he had obtain'd not only *Moſes's Sight*, but his *Wiſh*, and had ſeen not the Back-parts only, but the Face of God. Nor is he content to ſit down with bare Deiſm, but with a God acknowledges both Providence and a Reveal'd Religion, and particularly the Chriſtian, as the only one that can juſtly pretend to the Faith of a Reaſonable Creature, and that is at once worthy of both God and Man. Nor is he only a Chriſtian at large, and to himſelf, but Communicates with his Fellow-Chriſtians, and becauſe he cannot do ſo with all of them, joyns himſelf to a particular Society of Chriſtians, ſuch as is ſuppoſed to be a pure and ſound part of the Catholick Church; with them he Communicates in all the Externals of Religion, and is very Zealous and Conformable in his Way, very Sound and Orthodox in all Points, conceiving as rightly both of the *Myſteries* and of the *Morals* of the Goſpel as any Man in the World, and as ready to maintain the Truths of it, as far as Words or Writing will go, againſt any that ſhall either deny or miſrepreſent them. I ſay as far as Words or Writing will go, for you are very much miſtaken in the Man if you expect he ſhould be a Martyr for the God or the Religion he profeſſes;

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ſo far is he from *Dying for* it, that he does not ſo much as *Live* according *to* it. With all his Faith and Knowledge and his high Pretenſions to both, you will find him as looſe and diſorderly in his Manners as if he believ'd nothing of what he profeſſes, or as any of thoſe who are declared Infidels. He has an Angel's Form and Voice, but a Devil's *Foot*, breaks the Commandments with a Sound Creed, and Marches on in the Way to Hell, with Directions to Heaven in his Hand. For indeed his Divinity lies only in his Head, and though his Tongue number him among the Faithful, his Life is all over *Infidel*. And here he ſtrikes hands with the Atheiſt again, walks with him in the ſame Road, though Diſputing againſt him as he goes. He diſavows his Principle, but conſpires with him in his Intention, and moſt effectually does his Work, and will no doubt ſhare with him in his Wages. Such Men there were even in the Firſt and Beſt Days of the Church, and I am afraid a great many more ſuch Now to whom this Character of the Apoſtle's is the beſt that belongs, *They profeſs that they know God*, but in Works *they deny him.*

Whether the Apoſtle intends this of the *Jewiſh* falſe Teachers who though they profeſs'd to know and believe the One Living and True God, yet lived like Atheiſts, in as perfect a Contradiction to his Will as if there were no God, or as any of the Gentiles who were Ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ *without God in the World*, in Alluſion to what is ſaid, *Rom.* 2. 17. *Behold thou art called a Jew, and reſteſt in the Law, and makeſt thy boaſt of God, and knoweſt his Will*, &c. Or whether he had the *Gnoſtics* in his View, who pretended to great Knowledge of God and Divine Matters, but liv'd Profane and Impious

Lives, and with all their Sublime and Lofty Theories were no better than Atheiſts in their Practice, I ſhall not think it a Queſtion of that Moment as to ſpend any time in the Reſolution of it, but taking the Words as a General Propoſition applicable to all Ages and Places of the World, as in which a Good Faith or Profeſſion and an ill Life Meet together (the two Strange Ingredients that go to the Compoſition of Practical Atheiſm) ſhall oblige my ſelf to the Conſideration of the following Particulars.

First, That the profeſs'd Belief of a Deity is Conſiſtent with an ill Life, or, that thoſe who Profeſs to believe the Being of a God, may and do often lead ill Lives.

Secondly, That an ill Life is a real Denial of God, or, that thoſe who lead wicked Lives do really Deny that God whom they otherwiſe Profeſs.

Thirdly, I ſhall Mark out ſome Particular Vices and Vicious Practices which are in a more Eminent Manner Denials of God.

Concerning the Firſt of theſe, that the Profeſs'd Belief of a Deity is Conſiſtent with an ill Life, I need not ſay much, becauſe 'tis what we all know by viſible Experience, and that ſo well, that there is more need to Lament a Truth that reflects ſo much upon the Reaſon of Mankind, and is ſuch a ſtanding Shame and Reproach to our Natures, than to have it further laid open. But not to let this part go without a little Reflection, we may conſider that though the External Profeſſion of a God (whether he be believ'd or no) be a conſiderable reſtraint upon

upon Mankind, and an Inſtrument of Publick Order in the World, yet this does not neceſſarily carry along with it an inward Senſe of Religion, nor a true Regularity of Life and Converſation. It will indeed keep up the *Form* of Religion (for otherwiſe how ſhall even the Profeſſion of it ſtand) but it may be ſtill a dead, empty Form, without any thing of the Power and Life of Godlineſs, and Men may lead very ill Lives, while they make Profeſſion of all thoſe great things that *ſhould*, and (if ſoundly believ'd) *would* certainly ingage them in the contrary Practice. For 'tis in the firſt place very poſſible that he who outwardly profeſſes the Belief of a God, may in his Heart believe no ſuch thing. He may with great Formality ſtand up at the Creed, and bow at the Name of *Jeſus* too, and yet be one of thoſe Fools that ſay in their Hearts *there is no God*, and then what will his Profeſſion of the contrary ſignify towards the due Government of his Life! It may indeed put him upon a few Formalities and External Decencies, ſo far as is neceſſary to act the Part and keep up the Character of a *Profeſſor*, but it can carry him no further; and if the Man does go further, it is not by the force of this, but of ſome other Principle. But ſuppoſe he that profeſſes does alſo *Believe* a God, yet he may form ſuch wrong Conceptions of him as may be ſo far from deriving any good influence upon his Actions, that they may ſerve to corrupt and diſorder them. He may think with the *Epicurean*, that God is an Idle, unactive Being, that ſo Centers in himſelf as to mind nothing but his own Repoſe, and the Recollected Injoyment of his own Fulneſs, or if he allow him to have regard for any thing out of himſelf, yet he

may fancy him to be either so Soft and Easy, so Fond and Indulgent, so all made up of Goodness and Sweetness, as that he will not Resent or Punish the greatest Contempts of his Authority and Violations of his Law; or on the other side so Peevish and Difficult, so over-Rigid and Severe that he will bear with nothing, forgive nothing, accept nothing, make no allowances, but take advantage of the least Slips and Failures, and punish Men Eternally for them, though they are never so Sincere in their Intentions, and never so hearty in their Endeavours to please him. Or if he does not think either of these Characters to belong to the General Nature of God, yet he may ascribe both at once to him in relation to particular Persons, imagining him so fond and partially kind to some few happy Favorites as to decree them absolutely to Salvation from all Eternity, and accordingly in Time to see no Hurt or Evil in them, but to be blind to all their Faults and Irregularities, when at the same time he is supposed to be so unaccountably prejudic'd against all the rest as to destine them to Ruin and Destruction by a Decree equally Absolute and Irreversible. These and many other such wrong Conceptions of God may he that Professes the Belief of him Entertain, which may render that Belief altogether as ineffectual towards the well-ordering of his Life, as if he were without God in the World. But suppose him not only to believe a God, but to think rightly of him too, yet after all he may yield so little actual *Attention* to this his habitual Belief and Knowledge, he may so seldom think upon God, and so little Consider what he Believes and thinks of him, as still to lead an ill Life, and detain this Great and Fundamental Truth

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in Unrighteousness. St. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* 1. 18. that the *Heathen* did so: They stifled and Imprison'd the Divine Light (those Common Notices and Principles they had of God) in their Minds, and suffer'd it not to break forth and display it self so as to Influence their Lives and Actions. And hence it came to pass, *ver.* 22. that tho' *they knew God*, yet *they glorified him not as God*, did not pay him that Homage that was due to him, nor serve him in such a Manner as was worthy of him. And the like we may easily presume, and by sad Experience find too true in *Christians*, who though they have a more Shining Light to walk by than the Heathen had, know more of God and of their Duty towards him, yet may give as little Attention to their Greater as the other did to their Lesser Light, and so for want of having their Eyes open, may stumble as much, and wander as often by *Day*, as the other did by *Night*. The thing that I plainly intend is this; 'Tis a very possible, and indeed a very Ordinary thing for Men not to Consider and not to attend to the Consequences of what they Believe and Know (there are so many Passions within, and so many sensible Impressions without to divert them from it) and when they do so 'tis all one for that time as if they did neither Believe nor Know, and they stand upon the same Level with *Infidels* and *Ignorant* Persons, and will not act one jot wiser or better than they do, the want of Consideration alone being enough to frustrate all the Effects of their Faith and Knowledge in order to a good Life. For let a Man Believe never so much or Know never so much of the Existence, Nature and Will of God, yet he has the *Use* and *Benefit* of that Faith and Knowledge no longer and

no further then he actually attends to and exerts them; as let a Traveller's Eye-sight be never so good, it serves him however for Direction no longer, than he keeps his Eyes open and intent upon his Way, and if he shut them, 'tis not his general Habit or Power of Seeing that will keep him from Mistakes and Wandrings. If the Light be not present to him for ready use when he is to walk by it, 'tis all one as if it were at the other side of the Hemisphere, he could but be in the Dark then, and so he is now. For he has it not to order his Motions by it, though he has it; and so the *Traveller* is Blind, though the *Man* sees. The Application of this to Morality is very Easy, and therefore since he that Professes the Belief of a God may not Consider what is contain'd in that Belief, nor maintain in his Mind a present actual Sense of it, how Fundamental a Principle soever that may be, and in it self productive of good Living, yet for want of this actual Sense of what he habitually and in the general believes it may prove a mere nothing to him, and he may Live and Act as disorderly as if he acknowledged no such Principle. And when he does so, we may argue as well backwards from his ill Practice, to the want of his Actual Belief, as we did before from the want of his Actual Belief to his ill Practice. Which opens us an Entrance upon the Second thing proposed.

Secondly, *That an Ill Life is a real Denial of God*, or, *That those who lead Wicked Lives do really Deny That God whom they otherwise profess.* For so the Apostle expresly, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him.* These Works to be sure are ill Works, being set in Opposition to the Profession of God, which accordingly has laid us a

ground for the First Proposition, *That the Profess'd Belief of a Deity is Consistent with an ill Life.* We have now in the next place the true Natural Value and Import of these Works, what they signify, and by Necessary Construction amount to, which it seems is no less than a Denial of God. *In Works they deny him.*

By which I do not mean (nor do I suppose does the Apostle) that he that Lives an ill Life must Necessarily in his General and Habitual Judgment hold that there is no God. For that were to Confound the *Practical* with the *Speculative* Atheist, which need not be, since, as has been shewn already, not only the Profession, but even the Belief of a God may upon other Accounts be Consistent with a Course of Ill Living. Nor do I mean that there is any Necessity that our Ill Liver should by way of Positive Judgment, so much as *Actually* pronounce within himself that there is no God. 'Tis enough if he do not actually Believe and Consider that there is one, that alone being sufficient to frustrate and put by all the Influence and Efficacy of his General Belief, and to lay him open to the Assaults of the Tempter. When therefore, I say, That an Ill Life is a Denial of God, my meaning precisely is, that all Ill Livers do by their Actions plainly declare that either they do not thoroughly Believe that there is a God, but are Atheists in their Hearts, whatever they may pretend or profess to the World, or at least that they have not a present Sense of their Belief, and do not Actually Consider that there is a God. They either are not really convinc'd and perswaded of that Fundamental Truth, or else they do not duely attend to it; they are either under the *Habit*, or under the *Act* of Infidelity,

delity, which as it may very properly be call'd during the time that it laſts, a *Denial* of God, ſo 'tis that which the ill Life of any Man will juſtly warrant us to Conclude of him.

'Tis moſt certain in the General, that all Defect in *Practice* proceeds from, and therefore argues ſome Defect in *Theory*. For it being Neceſſary that a Man ſhould Will as at that Inſtant he Thinks, however it may be againſt his Habitual Judgment; (ſince otherwiſe he would Will what then appears to him not to be Eligible, which would be to Will Evil as Evil) if he Wills amiſs 'tis plain that he muſt alſo Think amiſs, and that there is an Errour in his Underſtanding as well as in his Will. *If any man walk in the day*, ſays our Saviour, *he ſtumbleth not, becauſe he ſeeth the light of this World. But if a man walk in the night, he ſtumbleth, becauſe there is no light in him. John* 11.9. This is true in a Spiritual and Myſtical Senſe as well as in the Natural. A well inform'd Underſtanding keeps all the Motions of the Will true and regular, but Ignorance and Miſtake will be ſure to pervert them. And as the Night makes a Man Stumble, ſo from his Stumbling we may conclude that he walks in the Night. Whoever Sins is Ignorant of ſomething or other which he ſhould know, and if not wholly deſtitute of Light, has at leaſt ſome Darkneſs in him. Either he is not ſufficiently inſtructed in his Duty, ſo as to know in general that ſuch an Action is a Sin, or elſe he does not think it at the very Inſtant to be ſo, or he does not (perhaps Habitually, however to be ſure Actually) think Sin to be the greateſt Evil; but that 'tis better to Commit it than to be without ſuch a *Pleaſure* or ſuch an *Intereſt*, the want of which in the Hurry of his Paſſion he imagines to be

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the greater Evil of the two. Or it may be he does not sufficiently consider the Consequences of Sin, nor the great Motives and Ingagements to Obedience, which are so weighty and momentous in themselves that they need only be consider'd to make them Effectual. Or he flatters himself with Hopes of Impunity upon the account either of God's Mercy, or Human Frailty, or the violence of the Temptation, or of the Number of those who offend with him. Or possibly he boldly Ventures upon Sin with a deluding prospect of Repenting for it afterwards, and that it may be after he has for a long time indulged himself in the Practice of it, not considering the Certainty of Death, nor the uncertainty of Life, nor the invisible Periods of the Divine Grace, nor the Stings of an awaken'd Conscience, nor the Terrours of the Last Judgment, nor the two Great Eternities. Some Practical Truth or other he is ignorant of, or, which comes to the same, has not in his View. For if a Man could Sin with all these Considerations quick and fresh about him, what is there left that should ever make him Repent? For 'tis the Recovery of these Thoughts that must put him upon it. But if these very Thoughts can consist with a Course of Sinning, the Man must e'ne go on in it for ever, there being then no handle left in him for Repentance to take hold of. We must therefore conclude that our Sinner walk't in the Dark when he Stumbled and Miss'd his Way, that either he had no Light with him, or that it fail'd him by some sudden *Eclipse*; that either he had not so much as an Habitual Knowledge of the most Concerning and Important Truths of Morality, or at least that the Eye of his Mind was turn'd off from the Actual

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View of them. That is in ſhort, that either he did not *Underſtand*, or that he did not *Conſider*.

And as this is true in the General, that want of Light is the Cauſe of Men's Stumbling, and that all diſorder in Will and Practice argues ſome Defect and Miſtake in Judgment, according to what the Scripture ſays of the Firſt Sinner, 1 *Tim.* 2. 14. *The Woman being deceiv'd was in the Tranſgreſſion*, ſo does it particularly argue ſome Defect or other, either Habitual or Actual, in the Belief of that Great Fundamental Principle, the Exiſtence of a God, which either is not Cordially and thoroughly receiv'd, or at leaſt not duely conſider'd and attended to by thoſe who preſume to offend and diſobey him. Infidelity of ſome ſort or ſome Degree or other is at the Bottom of all Sin, and lurks ſecretly in the Hearts of all Sinners. They either do not with a full Conviction and Perſwaſion believe that there is a God, but have ſome hidden reſerves of Suſpicion and Miſtruſt, ſome Sceptical Doubts and Irreſolutions about it, even when they ſeem to be moſt Confident of it, and Zealous for it; or elſe they do not keep up in their Minds a lively Senſe and Recollection of that Thought, nor with due Application conſider that there is really ſuch an awful Being in the World. Or they do not ſufficiently attend to the Conſequences of this Faith; or they do not mind what it includes, nor diſtinctly conſider what it is that they believe in believing a God, nor take aſunder and examine the ſeveral Articles of this their grand Creed, but ſwallow it down whole and in groſs, without either Chewing or Digeſting it, and then no wonder if like a Medicine wrapt up in an indiſſolvible *Vehicle* it goes through them without any Operation.

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In short, either they have not truly and sincerely in them this General Faith, that God is, or it lies dormant in them, and they do not live under an awaken'd Sense of it. Either God is not in all their Thoughts, or at least not in those with which they act, and by which their Actions are govern'd.

And all this they do as good as declare by their Wicked Practices, let their other Declarations and Pretences be what they will. For did Men heartily and thoroughly Believe the Existence of a God, I say thoroughly, with as firm and unshaken a Perswasion as they believe there is a Sun that shines upon them, or a King that Rules over them, and did they actually and seriously weigh and consider with themselves what they believ'd, did this Truth lie open and bare to their Minds, were their Eyes intent upon it, were it present to them, as present as the Thought of their own Being is when they see themselves in a Glass, or as the Thoughts of Death are to a Malefactor when he sees and feels the Rope about his Neck, is it possible that they should be so Wicked as they are, and lead such Immoral and Irreligious Lives as they do? No certainly, this is such a Mighty Idea, such a vast and pregnant Thought as would fill and wholly ingage their Minds, bear down their Wills, be an effectual Restraint upon all their Motions, and such as would not fail to keep them within the Bounds of their Duty. Not that I think it such an Infallible Security to any Man's Practice barely to whisper to his Soul, *There is a God*, (for 'tis not to be imagin'd that this Sacred Name should be as a *Charm* or *Spell*, that the very Mention of it should drive away the Devil and his Temptations) but that when this Great Thought comes to be open'd and unbowell'd,

unbowell'd, to be unravell'd and laid bare, there are ſuch Momentous Truths inclos'd in it as muſt needs ſtrike ſuch an awful Impreſſion into the Spirit of the Serious Conſiderer, as to preſerve him from tranſgreſſing his Duty. For to think there is a God is in more Words to think that there is a Being Infinitely Great and Infinitely Good, of the moſt perfect Juſtice, Wiſdom and Power, able to beſtow the greateſt Happineſs upon thoſe that Serve and Obey him, and to inflict the utmoſt Miſery upon Diſobedient and Rebellious Spirits, that is preſent in every place and to every thing, that ſees every Motion and every Thought that paſſes in the World, and will hereafter Judge it in Righteouſneſs, that hates Sin Infinitely, and will puniſh it if not Repented of, everlaſtingly. And can a Man Sin with this great and filling Thought before him, and Staring him as it were in the very Face? If he can, I know not what Thoughts thoſe muſt be that ſhall ever bring him to Repent of it. But if he cannot (and it appears by that very Argument, as well as from the Power and Efficacy of the Thought it ſelf that he cannot) we may then juſtly conclude, that if he does preſume to tranſgreſs his Duty, 'tis becauſe he has not a preſent and actual View of this Thought, and does not duely Conſider that there is a God, who is now his *Witneſs*, and will hereafter be his *Judge*. Whereby it plainly appears that Infidelity and Atheiſm lie at the Root of all Sin, and that God is really denied in ſome degree or other by every Worker of Iniquity, let him profeſs and declare to the Contrary as much as he pleaſe. Which juſtifies a certain *Engliſh* Phraſe in a more than ordinary Emphaſis, wherein we uſe to call a Man of a Wicked Life, an *Ungodly*

godly Man. And he deſerves the Name, though we ſhould put it into *Greek*, being as I have ſhewn in ſtrict Reality and Propriety, a *Denier of God.*

And let me tell him that this is the moſt *Effectual* way of Denying him, ſince Mens true inward Sentiments are to be concluded more from what they do, than from what they ſay. A Man may deny the Being of God in Words, only for Argument and Diſcourſe Sake, or out of Levity and Vanity of Humour, to appear a Wit and a Man of Paradoxes; or out of Bravery, to be thought one of a bold daring Spirit, or it may be for Experiment, to try what others will ſay; or the better to recommend himſelf to ſome ſort of Company by ſuch an outward Compliance, though at the ſame time he has Nothing of this in the Bottom of his Judgment. But when a Man ſhall deny him by the whole Tenor of his Life and Manners, 'tis plain that he really Thinks what the other Speaks, and there is more Reaſon why he ſhould be believ'd upon his *Life*, than that the other ſhould upon his *Word*. Nay more than that, he himſelf ſhould be believ'd upon his own word to the Contrary. For the bare Profeſſion of a God is no Convincing Argument that a Man believes a God (though it may be an Argument of *Charity* when nothing appears to Contradict it) ſince Intereſt and Decency may give us a ſufficient account of that Matter. But on the other ſide, a Wicked Life is a plain Demonſtration that a Man *disbelieves* him, at leaſt during his Continuance in it, an ill Liver being, as I have ſhewn, no better than an *Atheiſt for the time being*. Which in ſhort is the true difference between a Practical and a Speculative Atheiſt, the Speculative Atheiſt being in Habit what the Practical one

is

is in Act, and the Practical Atheiſt being in Act what the Speculative one is in Habit.

And as a Looſe and Profane Life is the moſt Effectual, ſo 'tis alſo the moſt *Miſchievous* way of denying a Deity. For beſides that few will be ſo uncivil and unmannerly as to ſay in expreſs Terms (whatever they think) that there is no God, whenever any one is ſo hardy as to talk at that rate, 'tis ſuch an intrenchment upon Publick Decency, ſuch a Violation to Common Modeſty, ſuch an Affront to the Natural Senſe of Mankind, that every one is preſently alarm'd at it, and upon his Guard againſt it, and few will believe that the Man ſpeaks in Earneſt, and ſo the Poiſon for want of due Infuſion does but little hurt. But now Wicked Practices inſinuate themſelves by Degrees, and as it were inſenſibly and unawares; and with themſelves that Principle of Infidelity from which they proceed, and of which they carry a very Strong and Contagious Tincture. Whereby it comes to paſs that the Practical, though perhaps not always a worſe Man, may yet do more real *Miſchief* than the Speculative Atheiſt.

However, whether he does or no, he is to be ſure more *Abſurd* and *Inconſiſtent* with himſelf, and more *Self-Condemn'd*. They are indeed both of them Deniers of God, but with this difference, that if the Speculative Atheiſt denies him in Practice, he denies him in Principle too, and ſo is a down-right plain-dealing Sinner; conſiſtent with himſelf, and throughout of a piece: But now the Practical Atheiſt, though he lives altogether as the other does, yet he Profeſſes and Pretends to better Things, and ſo adds *Hypocriſie* to his other Immoralities. As his ill Life is a ſenſible and breathing

Scandal

Scandal to his Profeſſion, ſo his Profeſſion is a conſtant upbraiding Objection and Aggravation to his Ill Living, expoſing him to the juſt Cenſure and Deriſion, not only of Good Men, but even of his very *Brother Atheiſt*, who may thus beſpeak him, and inſult over him. *What an Abſurd Self-Inconſiſtent Creature art thou! I indeed live a Careleſs and Diſſolute Life, but 'tis becauſe I hold no Principle that obliges me to live better; But thou (Fool as thou art) Profeſſeſt to Believe a God, and yet liv'ſt as bad as I that hold there is None. As I am, and as I think at preſent, I have no reaſon to Change my Courſe, my Conduct being very Wiſe if my Suppoſition be true, but did I really believe what thou pretendeſt to do, that there is a God, I ſhould think it concern'd me to lead another ſort of Life than thou doſt, and not to be ſuch a Self-Condemn'd Fool as thou art. I would go on to deride thy Weakneſs, but that I rather believe thou art at Bottom as very an Infidel as my ſelf, and that all thy Profeſſions to the Contrary, are but mere Shew and Pageantry, ſomething to blind the World, and to Compaſs ſome Politick Ends.* Now what can a Wicked Man Reply to this? Unleſs it be to own the latter part of the Charge, *Heb.* 3. 12. by Confeſſing that there is indeed a Heart of Unbelief in him departing from the Living God, and ſo to acquit himſelf from the Imputation of Abſurdity and Self-Inconſiſtency, by owning that of Atheiſm and Infidelity; which indeed is in great Meaſure the Truth of the Caſe, ſince, as I have ſhewn, an ill Life is a real Denial of God, and thoſe who lead Wicked Lives do in Effect deny that God whom they otherwiſe Profeſs.

And why then do they Profeſs him? Nay, why do they ſo much as take his Venerable Name into

their Polluted Lips, *since they hate to be reform'd, and cast his words behind them?* Why do they suffer their Lives thus to give the lie to their Profession, and their Profession thus daily to Reproach and Condemn their Lives? Why do they not either renounce their *Faith* or take more Care of their *Works*? What, to Believe like Christians, and Live like Heathens? Why do they not either throw up their Principle, or reform their Practice? Why are they such a standing, visible, living Contradiction to themselves? O the unaccountable Folly and Madness of a Wicked Life when 'tis join'd with a good Faith! The strange Absurdity of such a Sinner, the *Mystery of his* Iniquity! And yet how many are there that are guilty of it? No fewer than all Ill-Living Christians, though some more notoriously so than others. Which leads me to the Third thing I proposed, *viz.* To Mark out some Particular Vices and Vicious Practices, which are in a more Eminent Manner Denials of God. And among these I reckon,

1. *The placing ones End in any Creature*, whether that Creature be ones self or any other Being. He that makes himself his End, that Centers and Terminates in himself, that refers all things to himself, and measures all things by the Relation which they have to his own private Personal Interest, is a Denier of God to some purpose, and holds one of the First Ranks of Practical Atheists. There is indeed only the down-right Idolater before him, though it be a little disputable to which belongs the Right of Precedency, since the Self-Ending, Self-Centring Man does in a very true and proper Sense Idolize himself, by assuming to himself a Prerogative

rogative which the Infinite God only has, or is Capable of having. He as God ſits in the Temple of God, and is a kind of *Antichriſt* in *Morality*. And ſo again the Man that places his End in any of the Creatures without him in Senſible and Temporal Objects, in the Honour, Pleaſures or Riches of this World, is a very groſs Denier of God, as Deifying and Idolizing thoſe little empty things upon which he thus reſts and repoſes himſelf. Upon which Account it is that the Scripture ſays expreſly of one of theſe Lovers of Creatures, the *Covetous* Man, that he is an *Idolater*. And the ſame is altogether as true of the other two, the Ambitious and Voluptuous. Theſe have their Idols too as well as the Covetous Wretch, though not of Silver and Gold. Their Idolatry is only a little more Refined and Spiritualized. For whoever deſires any thing as his true Good, Deify's that thing, and if that thing be not God, is truly guilty of Idolatry. For God only is the true Good, End and Centre of all Rational Natures, having given them Appetites too large to be ſatisfy'd with any thing leſs than Himſelf. As for other things, they are ſo far from contenting our Paſſion that they do but Inflame it; and inſtead of filling our Heart, do but make the Emptineſs of it wider by their having a Room in it. They are all over falſe and lying Goods, and accordingly promiſed as Rewards by the great Author of Falſhood and Deceit. *All theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.* Mat. 4. 9. A Promiſe *wherein* (to uſe an Excellent Remark of the *Port Royal* upon that Text) *the Devil diſcover'd himſelf. Since God has never promiſed theſe falſe Goods to his Ser-*

Abregé de la Morale de L'Evangile. Pag. 25.

vants, but only to Figure and Shadow forth thoſe Goods which are True and Eternal. Now he himſelf is that only True and Eternal Good, for whom we were made, and in whom only we can be Happy, and therefore he that places his End and ſets up his Reſt in any Creature, makes that to be God, and ſo plainly denies him who truly is ſo.

2. *The deſiring that any Creature ſhould place its End in us.* This will eaſily be acknowledged to be another very groſs way of Denying God if it were Practicable, only perhaps it may ſeem too groſs for any to be guilty of it. And indeed there have not been over many (though there want not Inſtances of this Nature) who have let themſelves run up to that Extravagant pitch of Vanity and Impiety as to aſſume to themſelves the Title of Gods, and to have Altars Erected, and Incenſe offer'd to their Honour and Grandeur. He muſt be a Monſter of a Man that can be ſo Sacrilegiouſly Vain as this comes to. But 'tis not ſo very ſtrange to ſee Men deſire that their *Underſtandings* ſhould be the Meaſure of all other Men's, nay, even of Truth it ſelf, not allowing any thing to be true but whoſe Reaſon and Manner they can conceive and adjuſt to their own Minds, though reveal'd even by him who can neither Err nor Deceive. Nor to ſee them deſire that their *Wills* ſhould be the Rule and Standard of other Men's Wills, and accordingly to expect Compliance in all their Humours and Fancies, that others ſhould Love what they Love, and Hate what they Hate. Nor to ſee them willing to ingage Men's Thoughts and Affections upon them, to have Poſſeſſion of their Heads and Hearts, and to have them full of *them* and of their little Concernments.

Nor

Nor is it ſo very ſtrange to ſee them covet to have Men's Praiſe and Admiration, their Applauſes and Acclamations, and to endeavour to turn their Eyes from the Contemplation of God's Excellencies (to whom only Glory and Honour belongs) to the View and Conſideration of their own. Theſe things are no ſuch Rarities, being done and practiſed every Day. Nor is it any ſuch great Wonder that thoſe who can think themſelves worthy of their own Beſt and Soveraign Affection, ſhould deſire to have the ſame place in the Hearts of other Men. But now this is but another way of Seating ones Self as God in the Great Temple of God, the *World*, and receiving the Worſhip and Veneration of our Fellow-Creatures, though they do not ſet up to us Shrines and Altars, nor fall down before us with Incenſe and Sacrifice. To deſire thus to turn the Eye of the Creatures upon our Selves, and to have them ſtand fix't and intent upon us, all ingaged and imploy'd in the Contemplation of our Excellencies, what is it but in a manner to aſſume the place of God in reſpect of them, Firſt to Deify our Selves, and then to Wiſh that others ſhould behave themſelves towards us accordingly, which cannot but be a very Groſs, if only becauſe a *double* Denial of God.

3. *Hypocriſy*. This is a Vice that carries upon it very deep Prints of Atheiſm, is Seaſon'd with a Strong Tincture of Irreligion, and whoſe very Ground and Fundamental *Suppoſition* is Infidelity. There were no ſuch Practical Atheiſts as the Scribes and Phariſees, the Leven of their Hypocriſy was a Leven of Unbelief, and they voided the *Being* of God as much by their *Lives*, as his

Commandments by their *Traditions*. Indeed every Hypocrite is one of those Fools that say in their Hearts that there is no God, or at least that he is not Omniscient enough to be a Searcher of Hearts, and to Know what is Conceiv'd and Entertain'd there. For did he thoroughly believe and seriously consider this, he would never Content himself with the Form of Godliness, demure Looks, long and loud Prayers, and broad Phylacteries; but would Endeavour to enter into the true Spirit and Power of it, and would take care to approve his inward Man to the Eye of God, as well as his outward to the Eyes of the World. This, I say, he would do if he had a due Sense of an All-seeing God; but since he does otherwise, making his Court only to the World, and taking heed only to that part of him which lies open to Human Inspection, 'tis plain that he is aware of no other Witness, that he has in him an Heart of Unbelief (tho' he be commonly a Man all made up of *Faith*) that he secretly Denies God, notwithstanding all his Pretences to *Godliness*, and tho' no *Professt Atheist*, is yet an *Atheistical Professor*.

Some other Vices I might set down as Chargeable with a more than ordinary Denial of God, such as Blasphemy, Profane and Irreligious Talking, idle Swearing, Perjury, Witchcraft, *&c.* but after all there is no such Denial of God as *Final Impenitence*, nor such a Practical Atheist as the Constant Persevering Sinner, that lives on and dies in his Wicked Courses. Other Sinners, let their Crimes be what they will, have however their lucid Intervals, sometimes in the Dark, and sometimes in the Light, like the successive returns of Night and Day. But the Final Impenitent has a thick

thick Cloud always dwelling upon his Soul, is all over one solid impenetrable Mass of unmingled Darkness, like the Chaos before the Birth of Light, a Star so swallow'd up and all grown over with a Conflux of dark spots as never to be able to break through its Obscure Crust, and recover its Native Brightness; no longer indeed a Star but a Planet, one of St. *Jude's Wandring* Stars, to whom is reserv'd the Blackness of Darkness for ever. In one word, he is such a Practical as very little differs from a Speculative Atheist.

Now the use that I shall make of this whole Discourse is briefly this, that since (as you have heard) a Wicked Life is a real Denial of God, we would take the greater Care what Manner of Persons we are, and what Manner of Lives we lead, *that we would no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the Vanity of their Mind, having their Understanding darken'd, but denying all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, live godly, righteously and soberly in this present World*; *Eph.* 4. 17, 18. and order our Conversation so as becomes the Gospel of Christ, lest we be found in the Number of those who deny God in Deed while they profess him in Word, and be reckon'd by him among the Worst of Infidels while we place our selves in the First Form of Christians. Especially Considering that the Atheistical part (which I fear is a great part) of the World being willing to have as much Company as they can (as all Men are that walk in the Dark) and Measuring us by our Actions more than by our Verbal Declarations, will be ready to Conclude that whatever we pretend, we are inwardly of the same Mind with them, because our Lives and Manners are so much alike. And 'twill be in vain to tell them of

our Professions, or to go to stop their Mouths with *Creeds* and *Articles*, they will still insist upon what we do, and appeal from our *Faith* to our *Works*, as that which most truly speaks the Man, and reports the Temper and Complexion of his Mind. Let us declare and profess what we will, Men will judge of us after all by our *Works*, and so will God too, and so will he whom he has appointed to be the Judge of Quick and Dead, Christ Jesus, who in the last Day will return this killing Answer to all Formal Hypocritical Professors that shall then begin boldly to take Acquaintance with him upon the Account of some outward Priviledges, *Luke* 13. 27. *I tell you, I know you not whence ye are, depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity.*

Now to God the Father, &c.

A Dis-

A Discourse of Walking by Faith.

In Two Parts.

2 COR. v. 7.

We Walk by Faith, not by Sight.

THere are two ways of understanding these words. For either *Faith* and *Sight* here relate to different Objects, and then the Apostle does as good as say, We Live and Order our Conversation, not by what we see in this World, but by what we believe and expect in the next. Or they relate to one and the same Object, and then his Meaning is, that we live at present by a firm Belief and Expectation only of our *Future* State, and not by any present View, or clear Vision of that State. Either of these Senses will sufficiently Comport with the Apostle's words, and equally serve his Purpose and Design, which is to Express his Willingness to quit this State of Mortality upon Earth, upon the Confidence of Exchanging it for a better in Heaven. *Therefore*, says he in the Verse before the Text, *we are always Confident, knowing that whilest we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord*: And in the Verse after, *We are Confident*

I say, willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord. Then comes in by way of Parenthesis between both, as the Ground of this his Willingness and Assurance, *For we walk by Faith, not by Sight.* As much as to say, we are not afraid of what the World so generally is, to depart out of this Life, but willing rather, because we live by other Measures than the World generally does, not ordering our Lives by what we see here, but by what we believe and expect Hereafter: Or, because we know that Death will translate us to an open Vision and real Fruition of that whereof we have here only the Faith and the Expectation, this being a state of Faith only, not of Sight. 'Tis indifferent to the Occasion which of these Senses we take, since either of them will serve the turn, which is to shew the Reason why the Apostle was, and why all good Men should be willing to depart this Life. But though they agree in the same use and Application, they being both a sufficient Reason why a good Man should be willing to leave this World, they are however very different in themselves, and will lay us a Foundation for two distinct Subjects of Discourse; the First Sense expressing the *Duty*, and the Second the *State* and *Condition* of Men in this present World.

Part I. I begin with that which Expresses the *Duty* of Man, which lays out to our Consideration this Practical Proposition,

That 'tis the Duty of every Christian to Govern and Order his Life and Conversation, not by what he sees in this World, but by what he Believes

lieves and Expects in the next. Which is the first Sense of Walking by *Faith*, and not by *Sight*.

If we were to Collect the Duty of Men from their Practice, the direct Contrary of this would be their Measure. For nothing is more Certain than that the General way of the World is quite opposite to this Apostolical Maxim, indeed the very *Reverse* of it. Instead of walking by Faith, not by Sight, their way is to walk by Sight, and not by Faith. Sensible Objects are with them the only Realities, and 'tis by the Impressions of these that they govern not only their Lives and Actions, but even their very *Opinions* and *Sentiments*, most of which are built upon the Fallacious Reports of Sense, upon what they see, and upon what they feel, and are indeed no better than so many *Sensible Prejudices*, which they take up in their Infancy, and stick to all their Lives long. This draws after it a long Train of Mischiefs both in regard to the Intellectual and Moral part of Man, most of our Errors in Speculation, as well as Vices in Practice deriving themselves from this Fountain, and being as so many Grafts Shooting out from this Stock, only the Hurt that it does in Morality is so much the greater, as an Error in *Practice* is of worse Consequence than an Error in *Theory*. But be the Consequence of it what it will, the World still goes on in its old beaten Track, and obstinately adheres to its Antient (and therefore with it the most Venerable) Measure, *Sensible Appearance*. And though some few Noble and Generous Spirits by the help of free Meditation, and recollected Reflection, have at length, with no ordinary difficulty rescued their Understandings from this long-settled, and

and by Uſe almoſt warranted Uſurpation, no longer forming their Judgments of things upon the Confuſe Repreſentations of *Senſe*, but upon the clear and diſtinct Ideas of *Pure Reaſon*, yet where ſhall we find the Man that wholly renounces Senſe as the Meaſure of his *Life!* No, ſuch is the Infirmity of Human Nature, that all Men more or leſs *live* by Senſe, though ſome few *Think* and *Reaſon* above it. Not only Vulgar and Popular Souls that make up the Herd and Rabble of Mankind, but even thoſe of more refined Thought and Reflection are too much acted and govern'd by what their Senſe ſuggeſts to them: A thing which by the Corruption of our Nature is become ſuch an Appendage to it, that even thoſe very Men who have been ſo happy as utterly to diſcard this Meaſure in the Conduct of their *Studies*, do yet retain it in the Management of their *Lives*, and while the *Philoſopher* proceeds upon clear Intellectual Views, the *Chriſtian* is guided and determined by Senſible Repreſentations.

But this which is the Alloy and Mixture of *all* Spirits, makes up the whole Temper and Moral Conſtitution of ſome. There are Men (if I do not Miſ-call them by that Name) whoſe whole Meaſure, whoſe whole Conduct, whoſe whole Life and Converſation, whoſe whole Heart and Affection, I had almoſt ſaid whoſe whole Soul and Reaſon is nothing elſe but *Senſe*, and who walk as much by it as thoſe Creatures do which have no higher Principle. They will Believe nothing but what they are inform'd of by their Senſes, and for that reaſon they will not allow God, Angels or Spirits, or ſo much as their own *Souls* a place in their Creed, becauſe they *See* none of theſe things. And as they *Believe*

lieve Nothing but Senſible *Beings*, ſo they can neither *Love*, *Taſte*, or *Enjoy* any thing but Senſible *Good*. To tell them of the Pleaſures of Reaſon, ſuch as thoughtful Souls Enjoy in the Contemplation and Diſcovery of Truth, or Pious ones in the due Uſe and Management of their Moral Powers, the Delights of Meditation, or the Comforts of a good Conſcience, is to ſet Colours before a Blind Eye, they have neither Notion nor reliſh of the Matter. But ſhould you offer to go ſo high as to Diſcourſe to them of the Joys of Heaven and the Beatific Fruition of God, they can no longer hold up under the inſipid ſtupifying Lecture, but infallibly drop aſleep. They think of nothing but what is preſent and ſtands before them, and what by ſtriking ſome Senſe or other rouſes their Notice, and they value nothing but what is in hand, and what by its being there they can *Feel* to be *Subſtantial*. Futurities weigh but little with them, though within the Verge of this World, but to tell them of a Glorious Reverſion in *another* were inſtead of exciting their Faith, only to expoſe your own Credulity. They either cannot ſee to ſuch a diſtance, or the Object appears ſo little, ſo faint, and ſo obſcure, that they are no more mov'd at it than at one of the Feeble doubtful Lights of the Milky Way, when in the mean while every little trifling Pleaſure or Intereſt of this preſent World is to them like the Sun at Noon, that not only Lights, but Warms them too, puts a new Motion into their Blood and Spirits, and quickens them with the Life of Spring. This Material, Viſible, Senſible, Palpable, and (to ſpeak all at once) this *Preſent* World is the World they are Fond of, and wholly Solicitous for, they love it with Dearneſs, ſpeak of it

it with Passion, enjoy it with Greediness, and leave it with Sorrow, and whatever glorious things are spoken of the City of God above, this is the place where they could be content for ever to take up their rest, and spend their *Immortality*. One thing they desire, *Psal.* 27. 4. not that they may dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of their Life, to behold the fair Beauty of the Lord, and to visit his Temple, but that they may have the Freehold of this Earth, enjoy the Perpetuity of it, and for ever (so poor and vile is their Ambition) Feast their Hungry Souls with the low Entertainments it affords. They (Poor Creatures) have no Relish, if Conception of any higher, being to the full as much Dead and *Crucify'd* to the other World, as the Mortified St. *Paul* was to this. But to this they are alive, and for this think it worth while to Live, and accordingly by this they Conduct their Lives, making this the End of all their Thoughts and Motions, and the Measure of all those things which they call Good, Pleasant, or Profitable, which they will allow no further to be so, than as they serve the Interest of this present and Worldly State and Life, thus *walking* altogether *by Sight*, and *not by Faith*.

These are those whom the Psalmist calls *Men of the World, who have their Portion in this Life, Psal.* 17. 14. all that they are ever *like*, and all that they ever *care*, to enjoy; and whom our Saviour sets forth by the more significant Title of *Children of this World*, *Luke* 16. 8. as if like the old Earth-born Race, they were Naturally bred and ingendred from it, begotten of the fruitful Slime, impregnated by the genial warmth of the Sun. And I fear these *Children* of the World make the great-

est

eſt part of it, and ſome of them the greateſt Figure in it. For if we go to the Courts of Princes, what is there there but what Flatters and Entertains the Senſe, and what are the Lives of all great Perſons but continued Scenes of pompous Tumult, Noiſe and Shew, one great *Senſible Amuſement?* If from theſe we come down to thoſe of low Rank and Education, we ſhall find them yet deeper plunged (tho' not ſo *richly ſet*) in the Senſible Life, ſcarce minding any thing beſides their little Worldly Concernments. And, not to ſay any thing of the more Heatheniſh and Barbarous part of the World, we know a very Conſiderable Body of Men, who not Content to lead a Life of Senſe here, have found out a way to tranſlate it along with them into the other World, the Supreme Felicity of which they are taught to place in a *Senſual Paradiſe*, ſo living by Senſe, even while they live by Faith. But to what purpoſe ſhould I mention particulars, when *Mankind* is Sick of the ſame Diſeaſe, when the whole World runs upon the ſame Scent, and Chriſtians as greedily as any, who yet in one reſpect are more groſs than the *Mahumetans*, as expecting a Spiritual Heaven hereafter, after a Senſible Life led here. A Senſual Life is indeed a very proper Preparation for a Senſual Paradiſe, but what can be ſo Abſurd as to look for a Heaven of Refined and Spiritual Happineſs, and yet lead a Life of Senſe as an Introduction to it? And therefore though the *Mahumetan* be the greater *Epicure*, as carrying on his Senſuality through both Worlds, even beyond the *Grave*, where it naturally is Extinguiſh'd, and where the *Chriſtian* lets it fall, yet the *Chriſtian* is the greater *Sot*, who having ſo Spiritual and ſo Divine a Faith, will yet Chuſe to Live by Senſe. Which yet moſt of them wholly, and all of them too frequently do.

But

But though this be too much the Practice, the quite Contrary is the true Rule and Duty of Chriſtians, to Walk by Faith, not by Sight; to govern their Lives, not by what they ſee in this World, but by what they Believe and Expect in the Next; and that for ſeveral Important Reaſons.

1. Becauſe, beſides the Sin and the Miſery, the Weakneſs and the Folly, and the Many ill Examples and corrupt Principles which every where abound, they can ſee nothing in this World but what is *vain* and *unſatisfying*. The World indeed promiſes great things to its Lovers and Votaries, and truly to ſee Men ſo eager and warm in the purſuit of its Intereſts and Enjoyments, Pitying thoſe that want them, and Envying thoſe who have them, one would be tempted to think there were really ſomething in them. But the wiſeſt and the greateſt Enquirer found juſt nothing, and both thoſe who were before him, and thoſe who come after him have ſped no better. And ſince Men have been hitherto diſappointed in the Search of Happineſs (though never any thing, no not *Truth* it ſelf, was ſo narrowly look'd after) there is no reaſon why any Man ſhould hope to find that *Now*, which the whole World have been *till now* ſeeking in Vain. But were there no Experience in the Caſe, Reaſon alone would ſatisfy as many as would Conſult her, of the utter Vanity of all Senſible and Worldly Objects. For how is it poſſible that a Soul made Capable of Enjoying an Infinite Good ſhould find Happineſs or Satisfaction in any Creature? What Proportion is there between ſuch an Object and ſuch a Capacity! And how then can One fill the Other? But Now if all the things that the World can preſent to our Senſes be but ſo many gilded Vanities,

Vanities, (as even Sense it self can witness that they are) then 'tis plain that they cannot be our *End*, and if they cannot be our *End*, then 'tis as plain that they ought not to be our *Measure*. We ought not therefore to govern our Lives by what we see here, nor reckon that Good or Evil, Profitable or Prejudicial to us, which is so at Present and in a Worldly respect, since being not themselves the greatest Goods or Evils, they may come in Competition with *Greater*, and so lose and transpose their Natures, but we ought to have our Eye upon the other World, and reckon that only Good which serves to make us Happy there, and that only Evil which serves to make us Miserable there, where the Happiness and the Misery are both at the Height.

2. Because the things that we see here are not only Internally Vain and Deficient in their Natures, but also *Transient and Momentary in their Duration*, which may also be Consider'd as one great part and instance of their Vanity. This is the Character of all Sensible Objects, nay, even of our Senses themselves, that they are but for a Time, and that *Time* the Apostle tells us too is *Short*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29. Our Bodies are built but for a little while, and our Senses oftentimes do not last so long, as if unwilling to stay to be Witnesses to the Ruins of their falling Tenements. But which soever gets to the Goal first, 'tis certain that they both hasten to Ruin as fast as they can, always wasting and Mouldring away from us, and the World without us will not be long behind us, since the *Fashion* of it is continually passing away, always Changing and Shifting its Scenes, and rolling on as fast as the

Wheels of the Sun, or the Wings of Time can carry it to its great Doom and final Diſſolution. The ſhort is, all things here have an End, and are drawing apace to it, we are haſtning from the World, and the World from us, every thing turns upon the ſame Axis of Time, only ſome deſcribe a larger *Circumference* than others, and ſo are the longer in finiſhing their *Circle*, but finiſh it they will all, and even Time it ſelf ſhall be no more; and therefore we ought not to take our Meaſure from ſuch paſſing and unſtable things as theſe, which are here to Day and gone to Morrow, nor Conduct our Lives and Converſations by them, but rather Steer our Courſe by the Fixt and Immovable *Points* of the other World, by thoſe Goods and by thoſe Evils which remain for ever, which Senſe cannot reach, which Faith only can ſee, and which Eternity only can Meaſure. All which is but a larger Deſcant upon the Apoſtle's Ground, when he reaſons thus, 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. *We look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen. For the things which are ſeen are Temporal, but the things which are not ſeen are Eternal.*

3. Another Reaſon why we ſhould not govern our ſelves by what we ſee in this World, but by what we Believe and expect in the Next, is, *Becauſe there is no univerſal Juſtice done to Men in this preſent World, according to the different Conduct of their Lives*; the Complete and Final Adminiſtration of that being (for ſeveral Wiſe and Momentous Reaſons) Suſpended and Adjourn'd to another State. That this is ſo, need not be ſhewn, it being the great Objection of all bad Men, and the Complaint of many good ones, that Happineſs and Miſery are ſo promiſ-

promiſcuouſly and indifferently diſpens'd, that Men are not dealt with according to their doings, but that Vice uſurps the Happineſs which belongs to Vertue, and Vertue groans under the Calamity which is due to Vice. All Men See and Experience this, though all perhaps do not *Complain* of it, being Senſible that Sufficient Reaſons may be aſſigned from the preſent State of things to Juſtify the inequality of this Diſpenſation. But I am not to give an Account here of the Reaſon of the thing, my Concern at preſent is only to argue from the thing it ſelf, that therefore *Faith* and not *Sight* is to be our Meaſure, the Meaſure both of our Judgments concerning others, and of our own Behaviour. That we are to paſs Judgment upon the Conditions of Good and Bad Men, not by what we ſee befal them at preſent (this being neither the Seaſon nor the Place of Diſtinction and Recompence) but by the Rewards and Puniſhments which attend them in the other World. And that we are to order our own Behaviour either well or ill, not as we ſee Vertue depreſs'd or Vice flouriſh in this Life, (where, as the Wiſe Man obſerves, *Eccl.* 9. Time and Chance happens to all, and where a Man knows neither Love nor Hatred by all that is before him) but by the reſpective Portions that ſhall be allotted to them in the next, when Perſons, Things and Actions ſhall be weigh'd in a true Ballance, when every Man ſhall be rewarded according to his Works, and inherit either a Happy or a Miſerable Eternity according to the good or ill Uſe he has made of Time. The Sum is, here Juſtice and Judgment Slumber and Sleep, like things happen to all, or if there be any difference made, 'tis on the ſide of Wicked Men, who commonly

speed best. But hereafter the Divine *Nemesis* will awake, and that thoroughly, take to her her Sword and her Ballance, redress all the inequalities that have happen'd during the time of her Slumber, and distribute to every one his own. Then Vertue shall recover her Right out of the Hands of Vice, and Vice shall be as Miserable as it deserves. And therefore since we profess to believe this, we should live and govern our selves by this Faith, and proceed in our Choice of a good or bad Life by this Measure, and not by those visible Events which appear to our View in this Life, which is a state of *Tryal*, not of *Reward*.

4. There is yet another very Considerable Reason why it concerns all Christians thus to Walk by Faith and not by Sight, and that is, *That the Privation of Sensible Good may not be a Punishment to them in the other World*. That there will be such a Privation is here supposed, and in it self most Certain. Within a little while we must part with all Sensible Objects, and utterly lose the Enjoyment of them. Let us adhere to the Creatures never so closely, and Hug and Imbrace them never so dearly, we must let go our hold; and let us tie our selves to them by never so many Knots Death will dissolve them all, and make a final and thorough Divorce between us. For 'tis by our Union with our own Bodies that we are United to those other Bodies which Surround us, and 'tis by the Mediation of our Senses that we have any intercourse with this Material and Sensible World, the Goods and Enjoyments of which, as great and as numerous as they are, hang all upon one single Thread, that of *Life*. When therefore that shall come to be Cut,

all

all will fall with it, the Enjoyments of Senſe will all be at an End, and the whole Creation will at one blow be ſeparated from us, and drop away under us. Now though this *Privation* of it ſelf be no Puniſhment, it being no pain to be without a thing, unleſs a Man at the ſame time deſires it, ſince not the bare Abſence but the Want of a thing is that which makes us uneaſy, yet it will be extremely Painful and Afflictive wherever it meets with contrary Deſires, and then indeed it is that it properly begins to be a *Privation*, which will be the Caſe, the ſad Caſe of all thoſe Spirits which depart hence in the love of Senſible Objects. For as the Soul is diſpoſed at the Moment of Death, ſo will She be after Death, carrying the ſame Affections and Reliſhes with her out of the Body, which She once had in it, and which She will now retain for ever. In this Life the Will is in ſome Meaſure Mutable and Flexible even in the worſt of Men, but the other Life being uncapable of Change, it then becomes Stiff and Inflexible as the Decrees of Fate. What they then Love they Love always, and what they do then not Love they never will. The laſt Caſt is then thrown, and as the Die falls it ſhall for ever lie. The Will ſhall then ſtand like the *Axis* of the Earth, fixt and ſtable to *immoveable Points*, without any Variation or Declination. Which ſettled and ſteddy Poſture ſome Conceive (and not improbably) to be expreſs'd by that Order of the King in the Parable concerning the Gueſt that came to the Marriage without a Wedding-Garment, *Mat.* 22. 13. *Bind him Hand and Foot, and take him away, and caſt him into outer Darkneſs*; by Hand and Foot, meaning the Paſſions and Affections of the Soul, which ſhall then (how Free ſo ever now)

be bound and tied up, and made uncapable of altering their Posture. The Soul therefore whose unhappiness it is to depart hence hot and warm from the Imbraces of Sensible Object, whose Affections are cleaving to them and Ingaged upon them, who leaves the World in Person before She has left it in Heart, will always retain the same Love and Passion for these things, and yet be uncapable of Enjoying them, and consequently always Miserable in the want of them. And none but those unhappy Spirits who feel this Universal Privation are able to tell how great the Desolation of it is, and to what Extremity of Poverty they then are reduced. Such to be sure as can never be felt in this Life, and of which all that we here call *Poverty* is but a faint Type or Shadow. If therefore we would have this total Privation of all Sensible Objects, in which we shall unavoidably be all placed by Death, not to be painful and tormenting to us, we must now *Detache* and Disingage our Hearts from the Creatures, wean our selves betimes from the Love of Sensible Objects; (which by the way gives a good Account of the Reasonableness of true *Christian Mortification* and Self-denial) accustom our selves to despise what our Senses recommend to us as pleasant, learn to be without what is grateful to them, deny our Sensual Appetites so long till they cease to crave, practice the way of Separate Spirits before-hand, be as Intellectual as we can, die to the World while we live in it, and, in one word, learn to *Walk by Faith and not by Sight*.

And how *Happy* is the Man that can do so! that can Conduct and Govern his Steps by the bright Views of the other World, and not by the dim Appearances of this. That can Walk so direct and upright,

upright, with his Eyes ſo fixt upon the things above, as wholly to overlook the Things, or rather the *Nothings* that are below. That can keep his Sight ſo intent upon Heaven and the Glory that ſhall there be revealed, as not to regard either the Enjoyments or the Sufferings of this preſent time, ſo fix'd upon *Eternity* as not to be moved by the Pleaſures or by the Profits of Sin, which are but for a *Seaſon*. That by the aid of an active and well-grounded Faith can look beyond all thoſe painted Scenes of Vanity, which either the Devil, the World, or his own Fleſh ſets before him, and carry his Proſpect into thoſe remote Regions where Senſe, though arm'd with a *Teleſcope* cannot reach ſo far into the other World as to enter within the Veil, and with *Moſes*, even *to ſee him that is inviſible. Heb.* 11. 27. That can (in fine) with the Apoſtle Habituate himſelf to look at the things that are not ſeen, and that are Eternal, the Bright, Inviſible Objects of the other World, and that ſo long till his dazzled Eye can ſee no more of this, and his elevated Mind is wrought up not only to a Contempt, but even to a Forgetfulneſs of the little Earth upon which he dwells. O happy Oblivion of Earthly things which puts Heaven and Eternity in our View! Nothing which this viſible World can ſet before us is worthy our regard, eſpecially when at the End of the Landskip the Inviſible Glories of Heaven Solicit and Court our Love. Nothing which our Carnal Eyes can preſent to us is fit to ſtay or ingage a Soul that is Capable of Enjoying God, none of theſe Fading periſhing Objects deſerve a Room in that Heart, whoſe Capacity is Infinite, and which was made for Eternity. Let us then ſhut our Eyes to this Tranſient Scene, this

Vain Shew of the World, and open them only to that which is truly worthy of our View, the Solid and Lasting Glories that attend the Faithful Walkers with God above, the Felicities of Heaven. Let these be always in our View, and by these *fixt Stars* let us Steer our Course in this our Passage through the troublesome Waves of this World, and not by those *Wandring Meteors* which rise from the *Earth*. These are False Lights, and such as will end in Darkness. Let us not therefore Sail by them, but take the *Stars* of *Heaven* for our Guides, those safe and tried Directors, that will not fail to Conduct us to our Haven, thus walking by Faith and not by Sight, taking our Measures from the other World, and not from this, till we come to Enjoy what we now Believe, and our *Faith* be turn'd into *Vision*.

The great Advantage of thus walking by Faith is, that it will help us to *Overcome* the *World*, that is, to Subdue the Impressions that are made upon us by the Creatures, and by the Devil that employs them to draw off our Minds from the Love of God, and from a Life of Devotion and Obedience to him. To Suppress all Worldly Passions and Inclinations, those especially which Tempt us to place our Good and our Happiness in the things of the World, and forsaking the true Fountain of Living Water to apply our Thirsty Mouths to these *Broken Cisterns* that can hold none. To be Crucify'd to the World, and to have the World Crucify'd to us, to be dead to its Pleasures, and insensible of its Charms, to turn the deaf Ear, and the blind Eye to all those Pomps and Vanities of the World which we renounc'd at our Baptism, and to have it no longer in our *Hearts*, but under our *Feet*. To overcome those three triumphant Conquerors that are in the World,

World, and whereof St. *John* makes the Sum Total of it to Consist, *the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life*, to be no longer Slaves to our Sensuality, our Covetousness, nor our Pride, or Ambition, or any of those false Relishes and depraved Tastes of the Soul which dispose it to Mind and Savour the Earth, and Earthly things. Not to suffer our selves to be carried away with the Torrent of a Vicious Age, or to have so much regard for the Manners, Customs or Authorities of a wicked World as to be Conform'd to them, or follow a Multitude to do Evil, not to be over-aw'd by great Examples, nor Corrupted by Bad ones. To be above the *Opinion* of the World, and not to hang upon the Censures or Applauses of Men, or upon their Kindness or Disaffection towards us; nor to be Transported into undue Passions by any of the Injustices, Unkindnesses, Affronts, Abuses, or Disappointments that we meet with in the World. To overcome the Evil as well as the Good of it, to bear its Frowns as well as not to be inchanted with its Smiles, and no more to be disturb'd at the Experiment and Discovery of its *Vanity*, than to be over Charm'd with its delusive *Shew* of *Happiness*, as well Knowing that there is a Good proportion'd to the importunity of our Appetites, and that the other World has Enjoyments that will fill that Emptiness of our Natures which this only deludes and stretches wider, and that will quench that Thirst which this only Inflames. To be equal Proof against Prosperity and Adversity, so as not to be dispirited by the one, nor intoxicated by the other, but to carry an even and well-pois'd Mind in all the turns and varieties of a reeling and tottering

World,

World, and in whatever State we are, therewith to be Content. To discover the great *Deceitfulness of Sin*, the Depths of Satan, the Mystery of Iniquity, those Cheats, I mean, and Fallacies whereby Evil presents it self to us, and too frequently imposes upon us, under the Appearance and Semblance of Good, and at the same time to be so fix'd and steddy in what we know to be *really* that which the other *seems*, that neither the Pleasures nor the Terrours of the World shall either intice or deter us from it. In fine, not to have our Vertue or our Goodness depend upon any Worldly Interests, Accidents, or Circumstances, nor upon any Juncture, Revolution, or Turn of the Times, but at all times to keep exactly to what is Right and Fit, whether it pleases or not, whether we get or lose Friends or Preferment by it, and to resolve at any rate to please God, and satisfy our Consciences, however the World goes, and whatever the World says or thinks. This is to *overcome the World*, and a great Victory indeed it is, beyond those of the greatest Worldly Heroes and Conquerours. And 'tis a Life of Faith that will inable us to obtain this great Victory, according to that of the Apostle St. *John*, *This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith*, that is, a firm, hearty, and well-grounded Belief of the Truths of the Christian Religion, and an actual Consideration of those Truths, which will furnish us with unanswerable Answers to all those Temptations that the World can lay before us. For there are but Two Passions whereby Man may be wrought upon, *Hope* and *Fear*; and there are but Two Motives to work upon those Two Passions, that is, *Good* and *Evil*. But now Faith with one Hand

points

points out to us infinitely greater Goods, and with the other infinitely greater Evils than any the World has to propose to us. It opens one Scene to us and shews us Heaven, it opens another and shews us Hell. And after Two such Prospects as these, what, what can the World present to our View that shall be worthy of its regard? And how poor an Impression will be made upon our Hearts, by *All this will I give thee*, when this present World is so much out-bid by the Faith of the Next! But then it must not be *any* Faith that can do all this, not a few Slight, Superficial, Transient Acts of it, but a Firm, Hearty and thorough Belief, such as abides upon our Minds, and goes into the Ordinary Habit of our Thoughts, which we daily Carry about with us, and constantly Converse with, it must be a *Walking* by *Faith*. For the Temptations of the World Consist of Present Goods and Present Evils, and this is the great Advantage that the Devil has above Christ, that he Courts our Affections, Bribes our Passions, and Cheapens our Souls with *ready Money in his Hand*. And therefore unless we can set one Certainty against another, oppose Evidence to Evidence, the Evidence of Reason and Faith to the Evidence of Sense, the Scale that holds the World (as light as it is) will weigh down the other, and our Prejudic'd Hearts will give Sentence for Earth against Heaven. For what though there be no Comparison between the good things of the other World, and the good things of this, or between the Evils of the other World and the Evils of this, absolutely Consider'd, yet will not the Advantage of *Presentness* and *Certainty* make the latter more prevalent with us, and what likelihood is there that the things of the other

World

World (as great as they are) faintly and imperfectly believ'd should have that force and influence upon our Hearts, as the things of this which we see with our Eyes, and feel with our Hands? But when once our *Faith* of the Other World comes to be like the *Sense* of this, and we are as well assured of Heaven and Hell, as of any of those Sensible Objects which touch us with their Impressions, what Temptation then would find Audience, or so much as Admittance with us, and what would all the World be to a Man that firmly and heartily believes these great things, and *Walks* by the Faith and serious Consideration of them.

But oh how Difficult a thing is it to lead this Life of Faith while we carry these Bodies of Flesh and Blood about us, and Converse with a Sensible World, and which is worse with *Sensual Men*! The Soul being plunged in Sense, is hardly touch'd but with Sensible things, which being so near her, and (by the Bodies side) so near a *Kin* to her, have a Strange Influence upon her, and affect her with most vigorous and lively Passions, not by reason of the greatness of the Objects (for alas they are not Considerable) but by the Force and Manner of the Impression. For this reason it is that there are so Few that walk by Faith, and that can turn their Eyes from Temporal things, and hold them fixt upon those that are Eternal. The Generality of Mankind (as I observ'd in the beginning) are wholly taken up with Sensible Objects, and have no Taste, hardly so much as *Faith* for any thing beyond them. And as for those Few that are otherwise ingaged, and that live by other Measures (especially if they venture to talk now and then of the other World, or to say any thing of

Spirits

Spirits and *Apparitions*) they are look'd upon as a ſort of whimſical Brainſick Men, mere *Viſionaries*, that indulge their Melancholy, and fright themſelves with Spectres of their own raiſing. If then we will be of the number of thoſe Few that abandoning the Meaſures of Senſe, dare betake themſelves to a Life of Faith, we muſt be Content to undergo a great deal of Pain and Travail within, and a great deal of Scorn and Deriſion without, we muſt walk Circumſpectly, not as Fools, but as Wiſe, and yet be counted Fools, and that by thoſe whom the World eſteems Wiſe, and who have the Creditable Name of *Wits*. And if we cannot bear this we muſt go out of the World. And ſo it would be beſt to do however, I mean to retire from the Noiſe and Hurry of it as much and as far as we can, to rid our ſelves of all its Weights and Incumbrances, to be as looſe from it, and have as little to do in it, and as few Concerns with it as poſſibly we may, that ſo Diſtance and Abſence (that which ſo cools our Affections to the other World) may make us indifferent to this, prevent our taking new Impreſſions, and wear out thoſe we have already receiv'd. But we muſt retire into our Selves as well as from the World, be much in Contemplation of its Vanity (the only ſide of the World that deſerves our Conſideration) think Continually upon Eternity, and after all Pray earneſtly with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 119. that God would *turn away our Eyes, leſt they behold Vanity, and quicken us in his way*, That narrow unfrequented way of *Faith*, which only leads to Life and Glory.

And

Part II. And so much concerning the First Sense of the Words, that which expresses the *Duty*, I now go on to Consider the Second Sense, that which expresses the *State* and *Condition* of Man in this World, which the Apostle here represents to be a State of Faith, not of Vision, if we suppose him (as we now do) to refer Faith and Vision to one and the same Object, and that Object to be a Future Life. In reference to which our present Condition (as he tells us) is to *VValk by Faith and not by Sight.*

Before I go any further, I cannot but observe the difference that already appears between the *State* and the *Practice* of Men. The Practice of Men generally is to Walk by Sight, not by Faith, but the State of Men on the Contrary is to Walk by Faith, not by Sight. Concerning which last, that our following Account may be the more Clear and Orderly, it shall be disposed into this Form.

First, I shall state the Notions of these Two Fundamental Terms here, upon which all rests, *Faith* and *Sight.*

Secondly, I shall shew, *That the Present State of Man, in reference to the other VVorld, is not a State of Sight, but of Faith.*

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to offer such Considerations as shall justify the Wisdom and Goodness of God in allotting this latter State to Man while he is in this World.

To begin with an Account of the First of these, by Faith I suppose every Body would be understood to Mean an Assent or Perswasion of the Mind founded upon Testimony or Authority. And if the Testimo-

Teſtimony be of God then we call it Divine Faith, if of Man then we call it Human Faith. The General Nature of Faith is the ſame in each, ſince they both rely upon Teſtimony, only as the Teſtimony differs the Faith alſo varies, and Human Teſtimony differing from Divine as much as Fallible differs from Infallible, the ſame in Proportion will alſo be the difference between Human and Divine Faith. Which yet ſeems rather a Gradual than a Specific Difference, the only Effect which the different Quality of the Teſtimony has upon the Aſſent being to give it a higher Degree of Certainty and Aſſurance. And thus is Faith diſtinguiſh'd into Human and Divine; though when we ſpeak of Faith Abſolutely and Simply, we are preſumed to intend *Divine* Faith, which alſo I ſuppoſe to be that which is intended in this place.

By Sight here, as oppoſed to Faith, we may underſtand either the Viſion of a thing, or the clear Perception of Truth. For Sight is Twofold as well as Faith, that of the Senſe which perceives ſuch Objects as are proportion'd to it, and that of the Mind which diſcerns things of a proportionate Nature by their prope Light. The former I would call Senſible, the latter Intellectual Sight. This Intellectual Sight is the ſame with *Knowledge*, and admits again of a double Order being either *Intuitive*, or *Demonſtrative*. *Intuitive* when we perceive the Agreement or Diſagreement of one Idea with another immediately and by themſelves, without the Mediation of any other Idea. *Demonſtrative*, when this Agreement or Diſagreement is perceiv'd, not immediately by Comparing the Ideas with themſelves, but mediately by Comparing them with a Third, that is, when we perceive that they

they agree or disagree with themselves, as we find them to agree or disagree with some Third Idea, which we are often forc'd to make use of as a Common Measure, because we cannot always so Collate and Confront our other Ideas together as to see whether they agree or no by their mere Comparison. This Third intervening Idea is what we usually call a Medium or *Proof*, the Process of the Mind by it from one thing to another is *Reasoning*, and the Discovery that results from it is what we properly call *Science*, which in short is neither more nor less than a clear Perception of a Conclusion by clear and certain Principles or Premises. I say *Clear*, for this is the great difference that distinguishes it from Faith. For Faith may be *Firm*, because he that believes in God does not hesitate or doubt of the truth of what he reveals. And it may also be certain, because it may rely upon the most certain Foundation, the Testimony of God, who is Infallible in himself, and cannot deceive. And thus far it stands upon a level with Science. But herein it comes short of it in that it is not Clear or Evident. For he that Believes does not give his Assent, because either by Sense or Reason he perceives the thing to be thus or thus, but merely because he has the Word of God for it. Which though it be enough to found a Firm and Certain, is not however enough to beget a Clear and Evident Assent.

From this Account of Faith and Sight it appears that the great and distinguishing Character of Sight is Light and Evidence, and that of Faith Inevidence and Obscurity. Not that this Obscurity is to be applied to the Formal Reason of Faith (which may be clear enough, and sometimes as clear as any Natural

tural Light) but to the Matter or Object of it. For we are Carefully to distinguish between the thing believ'd, and the Reason or Motive that induces us to believe it. There may be a clear Reason why a Man should believe an Obscure thing. But then as the Reason is never the less Clear because the Matter is Obscure, so neither is the Matter ever the less Obscure because the Reason is Clear. Not that this again is so to be understood, neither as if the Matter of Faith were absolutely and in it self inevident, and such as could not be known. For (notwithstanding the decision of some Eminent Schoolmen to the contrary in this Point) I can well Conceive that the same Proposition may be at once the Object of both Faith and Science. And should God reveal to me any Mathematical Truth, as suppose that two Triangles having the same Base, and being within the same Parallels, are Equal; and should I who at first receiv'd it upon his Authority, come afterwards to be able to Demonstrate it my self upon the Known Principles of Art, who, that well Considers the Natures of these things, would say that my Science evacuated my Faith, and that I ceased to be a Believer, as soon as I became a Philosopher? And who I wonder would refuse a Demonstrative Account (if it might be had) of a Revealed Truth, suppose, of the Creation of the World, merely for fear of injuring his Faith, which yet he were bound in Conscience to do if Inevidence and Obscurity were so absolutely of the Essence of Faith as some pretend: For then it would be unlawful to inform ones self by Study of the Natural Account of any reveal'd Truth, because 'tis unlawful to destroy ones Faith, which I think is a Scruple that can hardly Enter, to be sure never

ſtay long in any conſidering Head. When therefore the Object of Faith is Charged with Obſcurity, and Faith is ſaid (as it Commonly is) to be of Inevident things, the Meaning is not of an *Abſolute*, but of a *Relative* inevidence. Not that what is Believ'd is ſo all over dark and obſcure that it cannot (while believ'd) abſolutely be known, but only that it cannot under that Formality, and ſo far as it is *Believ'd*, being always in that reſpect inevident, how bright and clear ſo ever it may be in other reſpects. The ſhort is, let the Object be never ſo evident and demonſtrable in it ſelf, and upon other Accounts, yet as *Believ'd* it is always Obſcure, Faith having no regard to the proper Light and Evidence of the Thing, but only to the Teſtimony of the Revealer, whoſe bare Authority is the only Ground ſhe builds her Aſſent upon, though the Truth of the thing it ſelf, abſolutely Conſider'd, may alſo ſtand upon other Foundations, and be rationally proved by Arguments from within, and ſo be ſeen by its own Light. But let the Light ſhine never ſo bright upon the Object from other Sides, Faith lets in none, nor has any regard to that which ſhe finds there, but walks with her Eyes Shut, contenting her ſelf with the certainty of Revelation, and leaving to Science the Evidence of the thing; So that the Object is always dark to her, how clear and lightſome ſoever it may be in it ſelf. Wherein it falls very ſhort of the Perfection of Science, though in reſpect to Firmneſs and Certainty it may be equal to it. All which is briefly Couch'd in that Excellent Account of Faith given by the Author to the *Hebrews*, when he ſays, *Heb.* 11.1. that 'tis the *Subſtance of things hoped for, and the Argument of things not ſeen.* Where by Subſtance and Argument he equals it with Science in regard of the Firm-

Firmneſs and Certainty of the Aſſent, but by ſaying that 'tis of things *not ſeen*, he makes it Vail and Stoop to it in point of Evidence, in which reſpect indeed Faith is as much inferiour to Sight, as Darkneſs is to Light.

I have dwelt the longer upon this Matter, and Diſcours'd it the more nicely, partly that the Limits between Faith and Sight being duely ſet, and their Differences well adjuſted, it may appear that there is not that Repugnancy between Faith and Reaſon that is pretended by ſome, who decry Philoſophy as inconſiſtent with Faith, and therefore not fit for a Chriſtian (ſince, as has been ſhewn, they are not ſuch Enemies but that they can both dwell under the ſame Roof) and partly, that it may appear how imperfect and defective a State of Faith is in compariſon of Sight, as having nothing of that Light and Brightneſs wherewith the other ſo clearly Shines, that ſo we may be touch'd with the more lively Sentiment of Humility and Self-dejection, when we ſhall come to underſtand that this dark Obſcure State is that which is allotted to us while we are in this World. Which leads me to ſhew,

Secondly, *That the preſent State of Man in reference to the other World is not a State of Sight, but of Faith.* Some will tell you, and with great ſhew of Reaſon too, that this is the State of Man in Reference even to *this* World, of whoſe Exiſtence we can be convinc'd only by Faith, there being no ſtrict Demonſtration (though many Senſible Preſumptions) for it, as indeed there is not, according to them, for any thing but God and our own Souls, which are the only Objects to the belief of whoſe Exiſtence they will allow us to be determin'd by any certain and inſuperable Argument. I ſhall not in-

dulge Curioſity ſo far as to enter into a diſcuſſion of this Matter. Only I here remarque that whatever Aſſurance, beſides the Word of God for it, we may have of the *Exiſtence* of a Material World, the *Nature* of things however is ſo dark and overſhadow'd, ſo retired and withdrawn from our View, that though I cannot well ſay that we walk here by *Faith*, ſince God has not thought it worth while to make us any Revelation about theſe Matters, yet I think I may ſay that we Walk by any thing rather than by *Sight*. For alas what is it that we *See*? Nothing but the Shell and Surface of things, and there too only the groſſer and ruder Strokes of Nature's Pencil. Our Natural Senſes are too dull, and ſo are our Artificial ones too, to hold any Proportion with the Works of God, who even in *theſe* his ways is unſearchable and paſt finding out. Glaſſes diſcover to us many things, but leave us ignorant of a great deal more; and the greateſt thing which they help us to ſee is the defect of our own Sight. Beſides our Senſes are ſo *Fallacious* too as well as *dull*, that inſtead of Building upon their Reports, one of the greateſt *Atchievments* of our Underſtandings is to Correct their Errours, which take ſuch early Poſſeſſion of our Souls, and grow up ſo familiarly with us from our Infancy, that they ſettle into ſo many inveterate Prejudices, which we are afterwards apt to Confound with the dictates of the pureſt Reaſon, and 'tis late, if ever, that we diſcover our ſo confirm'd and ſo *Naturalized* Miſtake. But Suppoſe we do, and that never ſo early too, yet how Contracted will be the Sphere of our Science, and how little is it we are ever like to know of the things about us, when even our Reaſon (the Great Inſtrument of our Knowledge and our ſo much valued and boaſted Perfection) is founded

ded upon the Narrowneſs of our Minds, which not being able to Judge of the Truth or Falſhood of a Propoſition by the mere Compariſon of the two Ideas which Compoſe it, are fain to have recourſe to a Third, and ſo from ſomething more Known to proceed in the Search of what is Unknown. If then the Light which is in us be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs, as our Saviour ſaid in another Caſe. The truth is, the Eyes of our Underſtanding are ſo dark, and our Intellectual Views ſo ſhort, that after all our Study, we know little more of the World we live in (beſides the *Geography* of it, and a few of its greater *Motions*) than of the remoteſt Regions in the Planetary Orbs. The whole Earth is to us as one great *America*, and though Men will dig as deep in it for *Knowledge* as they do for *Gold*, yet we are not only utter Strangers to its inner Regions, but to its Surface too, every thing we meet with there wears its Mask and Veil, and paſſes by us *incognito*, we converſe with Riddles and Wonders, the leaſt things puzzle and amuſe us as well as the Greateſt, and *Nature*, the Conſtant Subject of our Philoſophy, has its *Myſteries* as well as *Faith*. So that we can hardly be ſaid even with reſpect to this World to *Walk by Sight*.

Much leſs then in reſpect of the other, which is parted and skreen'd from us by an impenetrable Veil; and like the Top of Mount *Sinai* when God was there, all wrapt up in Clouds and thick Darkneſs. *Between us and you*, ſaid *Abraham* to the rich Man, *there is a great Gulph fix'd: So that they which would paſs from hence to you cannot, neither can they paſs to us, that would come from thence*, *Luk.* 16. 26. And the like may be ſaid here, there being as truly a Gulph fix'd (though not altogether ſo impaſſable a One) between the other World and this, as be-

tween Heaven and Hell. Χάσμα μέγα ἐστηριγμένον, a Great Establish'd Gulph, a settled interval, a *Fatal* Distance. Not only a Gulph too wide to be pass'd over, but a Partition Wall too thick to be look'd through, divides the Intellectual from the Material World, so that allowing only for extraordinary Cases, there is no Commerce or Communication to be had between them. Nor are they acquainted with each others State and Condition, but are mere *Night* and *Mystery* to one another. Or whatever they of the other World may know of ours (as having been once here) we at least know nothing of theirs, and a great many of us I'm afraid care not whether they ever do or No. But the most Curious and Inquisitive must here be Content to be as ignorant as the most Careless and Regardless, and what *Solomon* observes of *untimely* Births is as true in another Sense of the most *Mature* ones, nay of the most Aged Livers, that *they come in with Vanity, and depart in Darkness*, *Eccl.* 6. 4. know nothing of the Place and State whither they are going, the dark invisible *Hades*; but are notwithstanding all their Wisdom and Experience in other things full as ignorant of the other World, as unborn Infants are of this, as having neither *Sense* nor *Notion* of it. So that there is no Walking here by Sight (unless we could see in the Dark, without a Beam of Light to direct us) we may perhaps Feel out our Way by the Clue of Faith, and that's as much as the Wisest of us all can hope to do.

For First, As to the *Existence* of another World or State after this, we believe indeed that there is and will be such a thing, and have (no doubt) good Foundation for this our Belief, but we have no *Knowledge* of it, strictly speaking, such I mean as is founded upon Rational Evidence. Our Reason

indeed

indeed (if not Bribed and Corrupted by our Paſſions) will repreſent it as a very probable and reaſonable Suppoſition, but all the poſitive and deciſive Certainty we have of it is from the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, who is therefore ſaid to have brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel, 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. Which he may be ſaid to have done, not only becauſe it was never Clearly and Fully reveal'd before (this being one of thoſe Myſteries which St. *Paul* ſays, *Rom.* 16. 25. were kept Secret from the Beginning of the World) but becauſe it was *Knowable* only by Revelation, the Light of Natural Reaſon not being able to determine it. So that in both Reſpects Jeſus Chriſt is the Firſt *Diſcoverer* of the other World. Reaſon indeed, by its own Light may diſcover ſo much of the Reaſonableneſs of the thing as to diſpoſe Men to the more ready Belief of it when it comes to be plainly reveal'd, but 'tis Revelation only that makes it Certain, and we believe by our *Faith* what we could never demonſtrate by our *Reaſon*. The old Philoſophers 'tis true would now and then talk of the other World, as a very probable Suppoſition, much after the ſame rate as ſome of the *New Ones* do of a World in the *Moon*, Problematically, and Conjecturally, but 'tis the Chriſtian only that has Aſſurance of a World to Come; and 'tis to his *Faith*, not his *Reaſon* or *Senſe*, that he is beholden for it.

So again Secondly, As to the *Nature* of a Future State, we believe in general that the Soul ſhall ſurvive the Body, and Subſiſt when ſeparated from it, but whether in a *Vehicle* or without one, whether ſhe ſhall retain her former Senſes, and whether any New ones ſhall be awaken'd in her, where ſhe ſhall be during the State of Separation, whether ſhe

ſhall go immediately to Heaven or Hell, or to ſome Common Repoſitory or place of Cuſtody, there to abide till the General Judgment; and if the latter of theſe, how deceas'd Spirits ſhall ſpend their time in thoſe Middle Manſions, and what Diſtinction there ſhall be between the Good and the Bad; whether they ſhall be diſtinguiſh'd by Place, or only by State and Condition, theſe are things which Exerciſe the *Thoughts* of ſome, and the *Paſſions* of others, which a great many Diſpute and Contend about, but which no Body *Knows*. So that Conſidering our Ignorance of the Soul's Abode, and Manner of being in the other World, the ſame may be ſaid of every well departed Spirit, that the Author to the *Hebrews* ſays of *Abraham*, *Heb.* 11. 8. that *when he was call'd to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, he by Faith obey'd, and went out, not knowing whether he went.* Again, we believe there ſhall be a *Reſurrection*, but how the Dead ſhall be Rais'd, and with what Body they do come, that is, how their Bodies ſhall be Modify'd and Organiz'd, what their Powers and Capacities, and according to what Age, Bulk, and Stature they ſhall riſe; and how the Bodies of the Damn'd ſhall differ from the Bodies of the Saints, are things which (though defined by ſome School-men with great Boldneſs) we muſt all Confeſs our ſelves to be equally ignorant of, and that we know no more how, than when we ſhall riſe. And thus again we Believe there ſhall be a Heaven and a Hell, but where Hell is, whether in the Central parts of the Earth, or in the Air, or in ſome of the other Planets, or in the Ethereal Regions about the Sun and fixt Stars, what the Puniſhments are there; particularly whether its Fire be Material; and if ſo, what Immortal Fuel that muſt be which can Everlaſtingly

feed

feed its Hungry Flames; all this we know not any thing of, as I pray God we never may. But we are as ignorant of Heaven too, where it is, and what it is, and what its Felicities are; whether they consist Chiefly in the Perfection of the Understanding or Will, in the Love or in the Vision of God; and if in the Latter, how we shall see God, whether Sensibly or Intellectually; and if Intellectually, whether our Knowledge will be Sudden and Instantaneous, or (as a late Ingenious Writer more probably Contends) Eternally progressive and ever increasing, we are much in the dark as to these and the like things relating to a Future World, in a double Darkness, wanting not only the Light of *Science*, but in great Measure, even that of *Faith* too, God having thought fit to reveal to us a Future State in General, but to leave the Particularities of it still Seal'd up from our View, as Secrets reserv'd to Himself. And so we are expresly told by two Apostles, St. *Paul* tells us, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. that *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have enter'd into the Heart of Man the things which God has prepared for them that love him.* And St. *John* tells us, *Joh.* 3. 2. that *it does not yet appear what we shall be.* In vain therefore do we inquire, we are ignorant, and must be Content to be so till Death shall draw the Curtain, open to us a New Scene, and present to our View that Soveraign Good, and those bright Glories which no Man can *See* and *Live*. That which at present is both more Possible and Necessary for us is (instead of Curious Researches) by emptying our Hearts of Worldly Desires, and purifying them from Carnal Lusts, to prepare our Souls for a State of *Sight*, even that which is Beatific, and in the Mean time to rest Contented with the more humble and obscure one of *Faith*, as that

which

which the Infinitely Wise God has thought fittest for us, and is indeed more suitable to our Present Circumstances. Which brings me to the last Part of my Undertaking, which is

Thirdly, To offer such Considerations as shall justify the Wisdom and Goodness of God in allotting this Latter State to Man while he is in this World. 'Tis Strange there should be ever any Occasion to Apologize for the Conduct of God, but there are Proud Spirits in the World who are as ready to Charge him Foolishly in this as in any other Instance of his Providence, and the rather because it is a Check to their Curiosity, and a Mortification to their Proud Reason, which would have Nothing, much less such great things as the Objects of the other World, Eclips'd from its View. This I fear is the true ground of their dissatisfaction, but they pretend another, and such as is taken from Religion, for which these Men have a strange Kindness whenever it will help them to an Objection against it self. For say they, if we must renounce (as you tell us) this World which we see; is it not fit we should also have a Sight of the other World which is to Counterballance and outweigh it? Is there any Proportion between the Sight of this World and the bare Belief of the next? Ought not Seeing to be set against Seeing, to make the Scales hang even, that so we may make first a just Comparison, and then a wise Choice? And why then does God keep us so in the Dark as to the things of another Life, when those of this are set before us in so fair a Light, and require us to renounce a Visible and a Sensible World for one which is behind the Curtain, and which we only *Believe*? Either let us be in the dark as to both Worlds, and so chuse Blindfold, or if we see one of them, let the

the other be brought in View too. Thus the *Libertines*, and Profane Spirits of the Age are apt to Reaſon, or rather Mutiny againſt the Ways of God: But as Wiſdom will be ſure to be juſtified of her Children, and of her Enemies too, hereafter, ſo there are very good Reaſons at preſent to be aſſigned why God ſhould uſe this Diſpenſation towards Mankind.

As Firſt, *This Diſpenſation is moſt agreeable to the order of things in the Natural World*, wherein God's ordinary Method is to begin with what is leſs Perfect, and thence to advance to what is more Perfect. Thus in the firſt Formation of things we find that Chaos and Confuſion went before order, and Darkneſs was Elder Brother to Light. And Nature goes on in the ſame Courſe wherein it begun. For thus when in the Spring the Sun returns to Viſit and Comfort the deſolate Earth, the Trees bring forth firſt the Tender Bud, then the Bloſſom, then the Fruit, which alſo by Degrees arrives to its juſt Perfection. And the like our Saviour obſerves concerning the Production of Corn, *Mark* 4. 28. that *the Earth brings forth firſt the Blade, then the Ear, after that the full Corn in the Ear.* And thus again in the great Reſtitution of things we are told, that after the Diſſolution of this preſent Fabrick, there ſhall be a more Perfect and Glorious Syſtem rais'd, New Heavens and a New Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs. And to go no further than our own Bodies, we find that of the two States which belong to them, the more Excellent is reſerv'd to be the laſt. For ſo the Apoſtle ranges them, 1 *Cor.* 15. 44, 46. *There is a Natural Body, and there is a Spiritual Body; Howbeit that was not firſt which is Spiritual, but that which is Natural, and afterward that which is Spiritual.* This is

the

the Order of our Bodies, the leſs perfect of which is to Uſher in the more Perfect: In the mean time we ſerve our Firſt *Apprentiſhip* to Nature, in the dark Retirements of the Womb, before we are priviledg'd to ſee the Light of the Sun, and then too we have not our *Freedom* all at once, but are Children before we are Men. But now God is Uniform and Conformable in all his ways, and proceeds in the Methods of Grace by the ſteps of Nature. It is therefore reaſonable and decorous that the Oeconomy of Faith ſhould go before that of Viſion, as a leſs Perfect before a more Perfect State, that we ſhould ſee through this Glaſs darkly before we ſee clearly and Face to Face, and we have no more Cauſe to Complain that we now Walk by Faith and not by Sight, than that we have not now Spiritual, but Terreſtrial Bodies. Which yet is a thing Men are ſo far from Complaining of, that they are well pleaſed with them, and are willing to keep them as long as they can.

Secondly, *This Diſpenſation is moſt agreeable, as to the Nature of things, ſo to the Nature of Man, and his preſent Circumſtances in the World.* The Nature of Man in this Mortal State is not capable of any greater Light as to the things of another World than that of *Revelation*, nor of that neither in its fuller Degrees and brighter Communications. And accordingly there are many things relating to the other Life which God does not reveal to us, becauſe he cannot, not through any defect in Him, but in us, becauſe we cannot receive ſuch Revelations, becauſe indeed they would be no Revelations to us, becauſe we could not read the Book though he ſhould *unſeal* it; and therefore he does not, but keeps it faſt for the very ſame Reaſon that our Saviour Chriſt declined to impart many great

great things relating to himſelf and the Future State of the Chriſtian Church to his Diſciples, becauſe of their incapacity. *I have yet many things to ſay unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Joh.* 16. 12. And this is exactly our Caſe in reference to the things of another World, *we cannot bear them now.* Not even the Revelation of many of them, much leſs their open and naked Theory. Our preſent Faculties are both too dull to have a Sight of the Heavenly Glories, and too weak to indure ſuch a Sight if it might be had. Firſt too dull to have it. For this Sight muſt be either that of the *Senſe* or that of the *Mind.* But our Senſes are too Groſs for Objects ſo Refined, and our Underſtandings too Narrow for Objects ſo vaſt. And accordingly God who knows exactly the Proportion of both to his own Glorious Perfections has plainly told us that (whatever our Curioſity may aſpire to) he is not an Object for a Mortal View. *Thou canſt not ſee my Face, Exod.* 35. 20. ſays he to *Moſes*, when not Contented with Faith, he would have walk'd by Sight, *for there ſhall no Man ſee me and Live.* To the like purpoſe the Apoſtle who had been ſo far in the other World as not to know whether he had left his Body behind him or no, ſpeaking of God, tells us, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. that he *dwells in the Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath Seen, or can See.* The Glories of Heaven it ſeems are not only unſeen, but *inviſible*, and the Soul can no more ſee through her Body into the other World, than an Infant can ſee through his Mothers Womb into this. The ſhort is, theſe are not Objects either for Carnal Eyes, or for imbody'd Underſtandings, and as Fleſh and Blood cannot *inherit*, ſo neither can a Soul that is Cloathed with it *See* the Kingdom of God, becauſe indeed that would be in a Meaſure

ſure to inherit it, ſince even the ſight of ſuch Divine Objects cannot but be highly raviſhing, and I may ſay, *Beatific*. For which reaſon, as we cannot now *have* ſuch a Sight, ſo neither Secondly could we bear it if we had it. Mortality is too infirm to indure ſo much of Heaven upon Earth. So great a Light would dazzle our Eyes, confound our Underſtandings, deluge and overflow our Souls, and ſo raviſh and tranſport our Affections, that the Feebleneſs of our Nature being no longer able to ſupport it ſelf under ſuch high Tides of Paſſion, we ſhould not only be forc'd to cry out with the Amorous Spouſe in the *Canticles*, *Stay me with Flagons, Comfort me with Apples, for I am Sick of Love*, but ſhould even really Expire and Die; the diſproportionate and too prevailing force of the Divine Glories would break in with that Violence upon us as to diſſolve our Frame and melt us down into a State of Separation, ſo that *Mortality* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Cor*. 5. 4.) would really be *ſwallowed up of Life*. We know that a few Beams of this Excellent Glory (as St. *Peter* calls it) that ray'd forth through our Saviour's Body at the Transfiguration put his amazed Diſciples almoſt beyond their Senſes, they could ſleep undiſturb'd at the approaches of his Bloody Paſſion, but could not bear the Eſſayes of his Glorification. And St. *Paul* when rapt up into the Third Heaven was ſo little Himſelf there, that he knew not whether he was dead or alive, whether in or out of the Body. And what then would the full Diſplay of that aſtoniſhing Scene do, and how ſhould we be able to indure its Light and Grandeur! So that if we conſider only the *Nature* of Man, it appears very Neceſſary that God ſhould caſt a ſhade over the now inſupportable Glories of Heaven, at which the very

Angels

Angels themſelves are repreſented as Covering their Faces, and that we ſhould ſee them here no otherwiſe than through the Veil of *Faith*. I ſay the *Nature* of Man requires this; But do not alſo his preſent *Circumſtances* in the World require the ſame? Man is born for Society, being unable to live without it, and Society can ſubſiſt no longer than the great Wheel of Buſineſs, Trade, Mutual Traffick and Commerce goes round. But now ſhould God draw the Curtain and open to us the glittering Scenes of the other World, it would give an immediate arreſt to all the Motions of this, put a ſudden ſtop to all Buſineſs, and call Men off not only from the neceſſary *Affairs*, but Moral *Duties* too of Human Life, who when they ſhould be attending their proper Concerns upon Earth, would (with the Men of *Galilee*, *Acts* 1. 11.) be ſtaring and ſtand gazing up into Heaven. But neither will the preſent Circumſtances of Man permit this upon another Account. The Life of Man here is a State of Trial and Probation, he is now upon his Behaviour in order to a Better World, and a Sight of that World is part of his Reward. But now it is not fit that a Labourer ſhould have his Reward while he is doing his Work, much leſs ſuch a Reward as would hinder him from ever doing it. So that whether we Conſider the Nature of Man or his preſent Circumſtances, they both make it neceſſary that God ſhould uſe this Diſpenſation towards him, and we may Conclude from both, that though it be not Beſt in it *Self*, yet 'tis at preſent Beſt for *Him* that he ſhould Walk by *Faith*, not by *Sight*. But beſides,

Thirdly, God has alſo many Wiſe and Good Ends to ſerve by this Diſpenſation both in reference to the bettering the Moral State of Man, and the advancement

advancement of his own Honour and Glory. For by thus hiding the *Mysteries* of the other World from our sight, he makes Man in the first place do a sort of *Penance* for his First irregular Curiosity and intemperate Thirst after *Knowledge*, in desiring the inlightning Fruit, and for aspiring to be as Wise as his Maker. Again, by setting such narrow Bounds to our Sight, God gives the more scope and compass to our Faith, which though (as has been remark'd before) it can absolutely dwell with Science, yet, as not having so much room, cannot act so freely as when it has the whole Man to it self. The less we know, the more intire is our Faith, and the darker the Object of it is, the more its own Vertue and Glory Shines. God therefore by shortning and Contracting our View gives us an Opportunity of raising the Worth and Merit of our Faith, which will contribute to *inlarge* our View too at the proper Season for it, by intitling us to a higher Degree of the Beatific Vision, according to our Saviour's Answer to St. *Thomas*, *Joh.* 20. 29. *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast Believ'd: Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have Believ'd.* By this means again God teaches us to depend upon him, to trust in him, to acknowledge his Authority and Veracity, to have recourse to him for further Light and Instruction, and in the mean while to set the greater Value upon those Revelations he has already made to us, to exercise the Vertues of Patience, Contentedness, Divine Resignation and Hope (for what a Man sees what does he yet hope for) and to Submit our high Reasonings, and cast down our Towring Imaginations, and every thing that exalts it self against the Wisdom and Conduct of God, and to bring into Captivity every thought to the *Obedience of Faith*; in one word, to

renounce

renounce the Light of our Reason, to follow the Clue of Revelation, and to deny our *Understandings*, which is as great, if not a greater Mortification than the Denial of our Wills. Again, Lastly, God by thus darkning our Views takes the most Effectual Method to Correct our Pride, to instruct us in the most profound Humility, and to bring us to a sober Sense and right understanding of our selves. The way to Manage People whose Heads are distemper'd is to keep them in the *Dark*. And so God deals with us, he keeps us in the Dark, in perfect Ignorance of the things of another Life, that so by the advantage of Silence and Obscurity he may compose and recollect our Spirits (which too much Light and Splendour would be apt to scatter and disperse) and so cool our Spiritual Fever, and reduce our Intellectual Pulse to a moderate Temper, that so (as the Apostle expresses it *Rom.* 12. 3.) we may φρονεῖν εἰ, τὸ σωφρονεῖν think soberly, and as we ought to think, or be Wise unto Sobriety.

These Considerations might be more at large set forth, and to them likewise many others added to shew the Reasonableness of God's alloting the state of Faith and not of Sight, to Man while he is in this World, but I think what has been offer'd may suffice to Account for the Dispensation, and to Convince all that will Consider it, that Sight can no more consist with the Condition of this present Life, than Faith can with that of the Next, and that therefore it is expedient we should now *Walk* by Faith, as hereafter we shall *Rest* in Vision. And this notwithstanding the forementiond Objection of those who plead the Sight of the other World as necessary to Counterballance the Sight of this, to which the Answer is easie in few Words, that God may very justly require us to renounce a World which we See and Feel

for a World which we only Believe, ſuppoſing (which is the Caſe) that there be ſufficient Ground for ſuch our Faith, and that the Object Believ'd be of that importance as to Compenſate the want of higher Evidence.

And thus having given ſome Account of the Text, I ſhall now in ſhort make a Few Practical Reflections (by way of Inference) upon the latter Part of my Diſcourſe, and ſo Conclude.

And Firſt then, Since it has pleaſed the Wiſdom of God to allot to us a State of Faith, not of Sight, while we are in this World, this ſhould teach us *Humility*, a thing which highly becomes us as *Creatures*, but much more as Creatures under ſuch a low and imperfect Diſpenſation, as ſuch dark and hoodwink'd Creatures. *Be ye Cloathed with Humility*, ſays St. *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. and ſure we cannot appear in a more proper Habit, nor put on a more ſeaſonable and therefore more becoming Dreſs while we are in this State and Region of Mortality, this dark Vale of Tears, while we inhabit theſe Obſcure Houſes of Clay, while we wear this Corruptible Body that ſo preſſes down the Soul, this Body of our *Humiliation* (as the Apoſtle very emphatically ſtiles it, *Phil.* 3. 21.) that ſtands ſo much in our Light, and Eclipſes from our View no leſs than the whole State of the other World. If a little Knowledge be ſo apt to puff us up, ſure ſo great an Ignorance ſhould much rather Humble and Caſt us down.

Again, Secondly, If it be our preſent Lot to walk by Faith and not by Sight, then we ought to *Believe* though we do not *See*, and our not *Seeing* is no reaſonable Objection againſt our *Believing*. Not that we are to believe we know not *what*, or we know not *why*. No, Faith is ſo much an Act of Reaſon as to require that we underſtand the ſimple meaning

ing of the Propoſition we are to believe, and withal the Grounds of Credibility upon which it Challenges our Aſſent. So that the *Formal* Reaſon of Faith is a Viſible thing, and our not Seeing here is indeed an Objection againſt our Believing. But when I ſay it is not, my Meaning is, that whenſoever it appears to us that a thing is plainly and expreſly Reveal'd, we are to believe it upon the Credit of the Revealer, though we are not able in a *Scientific* way to Account for the Nature or Manner of it. For otherwiſe, beſides that we ſhall bar all the things of another World from being Objects of Revelation, ſince of theſe we have no Sight, what deference do we pay to God more than Man, if either we ſuppoſe that he cannot reveal Truths to us which we cannot Comprehend, or if we will not receive them if he does? We are therefore to Believe, though in this Senſe we do not See, unleſs we will ſuppoſe our ſelves to ſee every thing, and ſo make our own Underſtandings the *Meaſure* of all Truth. This I doubt will fall heavy upon the *Socinians* and *Libertines* of the Age, who will allow no Myſteries in Religion, demand a Philoſophic Reaſon for every thing, and will believe nothing but whoſe Bottom they can Sound and Fathom. But theſe Men anticipate that Viſion in this World which is to be the Priviledge of the next, and in the mean time Forget that they (as well as other Men) are to walk here by Faith, and not by Sight. Such intemperate *Curioſity*, and (as I may call it) *Hardineſs* of Underſtanding that rudely ruſhes on upon a Myſtery, without any Reverence to its awful Retirements, has done near as much Miſchief to Chriſtianity as utter *Infidelity* it ſelf. However I am ſure it is every whit as contrary to its Genius and Spirit. For that requires us to Captivate our Reaſon to the Obedience of Faith,

but theſe Men Captivate Faith to the Obedience of their Reaſon, and thereby become not only ill Chriſtians, but Enemies to the Chriſtian Religion. For (as Monſieur *Abbadie* to this purpoſe well obſerves) *the Chriſtian Faith has two Sorts of Enemies, the Infidels who attack it on that ſide whereon it Shines, and the Preſumptuous who ſhew no reſpect to its Sacred Obſcurity. Thoſe who deny all, and thoſe who would know all.* And 'tis hard to tell which of theſe Enemies are the worſt, though in one reſpect we may juſtly apprehend more danger from the Latter, ſince the *Infidels* are without the Church, whereas the *Socinians* (I'm afraid) begin to have a Party within it.

Traitè de la Verité de la Religion Chreſtienne. Part 2. Pag. 422.

Again, Thirdly and Laſtly, Since our Preſent State in reference to the Life to Come is to Walk by Faith not by Sight, this ought to make us very Modeſt and Reſerv'd in prying into the Secrets of a Future World, and will ſerve greatly to Condemn the Conduct of thoſe who either have recourſe to Spirits for Intelligence, or who employ their Study about the Philoſophy of the Separate State, about Angels and Immaterial Subſtances, intruding into *thoſe things which they have not ſeen*, nor can ſee, *vainly puffed up* ('tis to be fear'd) *by their Fleſhly Mind.* We ought rather to apply our ſelves to the great and Neceſſary Duties of Chriſtian Life, and to the Study of ſuch Practical Truths as have a tendency to promote it, as things that are better ſuted and proportion'd to the preſent Capacity of our Minds, and that are withal more neceſſary to be known, and wherein Conſiſts the whole Duty of Man. In one word therefore let us take Care to Believe and Live well here, and be Contented to See and Know Hereafter.

Now to God the Father, &c.

A Diſ-

A Diſcourſe Concerning Charity to the Poor.

1 JOH. iij. 17.

But whoſo hath this World's Good, and ſeeth his Brother hath need, and Shutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him!

THere are ſome Particular Duties that Concern only ſome Certain States and Orders of Men, and there are others that are Common to all Men. And of thoſe that are Common there are ſome that may lie *equally* upon Men, and others that lie *unequally*, obliging ſome in a greater Meaſure than they do others. Of this latter Kind is the Duty implied in the Text. It is a Duty of a *Common*, but *Unequal* Obligation. There needs no Special Authority or Commiſſion for the Exerciſe of it, as in the Duties of the Firſt Rank, ſuppoſe of a Magiſtrate or a Miniſter, a Natural Power or Ability will be ſufficient, which makes it no Particular, but a Common Duty. But then though all Men are Obliged to it that have ſo much as a Natural Poſſibility or Power, yet ſome are more ſo than others, becauſe they have a greater Power; which makes it though a Common, yet an unequally Obliging Duty. For, though Charity, as it ſignifies Good Will to our Neighbour, be a Duty of an Equal as well as Univerſal

sal Obligation, because here every one is, or by the Grace of God may be equally able (to be *able* here being no more than to be *willing*) yet as 'tis taken for that particular instance of it which is expressed by Acts of Bounty and Liberality, commonly distinguish'd by the Name of *Alms-giving*, so 'tis more peculiarly the Duty of the *Rich* and the *Wealthy*, who are in a more eminent manner Obliged, because better able to perform it. And who if they do not, must not pretend either to the Practice or to the Rewards of Religion, must neither set up for Lovers of God, nor expect to be the Objects of his Love and Favour. Those indeed that are truly *Charitable* we may well presume to be *Religious*, to be Lovers of God as well as Lovers of Men, and to have a Stock of Devotion as well as of Pity and Goodness. *But whoso hath this World's Good, and seeth his Brother hath need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him!*

The Words lie in a Form obviously resolvible into this Single Proposition, *That he that is well Able and can conveniently Relieve the Poor in their Necessities, and will not, has not the Love of God dwelling in him.* Thus in gross. But because this latter Clause *(How dwelleth the Love of God in him)* may admit of more Senses than one, and because upon the right and full understanding of it at all turns, it may be convenient before we go any further to explain and settle the Signification of this Fundamental Phrase, that so the Subject of the following Discourse may be the more distinct, and we may have a Clearer *White* for our *Mark*.

The great Question here is, What we are here to understand by the Love of God. And were one to Consider the Words only as they stand singly and absolutely, without relation to the Context, this would

would be no Question neither. For then I think by the Love of God we should upon the first hearing of the Words apprehend either that Love whereby a Man Loves God, taking the Term (God) *Objectively*, or that Love whereby he is belov'd of him, taking the same Term *Subjectively*, or perhaps Both. And thus when St. *John* says, *How dwells the Love of God in him*, it would signify as much to us as if he had said, How can it be imagin'd that either he should Love God, or that God should Love him! Thus I say the Words seem to Sound, and thus I believe they are commonly taken.

Now not to exclude either of these Senses because they are both of them true, and of Consequence to be spoken to, I think however that there may be yet another Sense no less true in it self, and (if we regard the Context) more likely to be intended by St. *John*. And that is by the Love of God here to understand that Kind of Compassion, or a Counterpart of that Love and Goodness which the Lord Jesus express'd towards us in dying for us, and which in imitation of his Example he requires from us towards one another. So that the Love of God in this Sense will be the same with the Love of Men, that is, Christian Charity, and *how dwells the Love of God in him*, will be as much as how is there such a Love in him as was in God, and as he requires to be in us; which though indeed the Love of Men, is yet here called the Love of God, because so highly Exemplify'd by God in dying for the World.

That this is the stricter and more immediate Sense of the Words we can no longer doubt, if we regard the Occasion that introduces them. St. *John* in the Verse before had commended the Excellency of the Love of God from that Signal Testimony of it in his laying down his Life for us, and had withal

Concluded thence that we ought in imitation of so Divine a Pattern to do the like for one another in Proportionable Cases. *Hereby* (saies he) *perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us; and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.* Then it follows by way of Contrariety, *But whoso hath this Worlds Good*, &c. As much as to say, if God has express'd so much Love to us, as to lay down his Life for us, and we in Conformity to his Example ought also to lay down ours for the Brethren, how short then of what God has done and we ought to do is the Practice of those, who will not part with some of their *Abundance* to relieve their poor Brethren in their *Necessities*! We ought if occasion be to part with our very *Lives*, but if we will not so much as part with some of our *Money*, if we will not open our Purses for them for whom the Son of God was pleased to open his Side, nor feed them with a little Bread, for whose Life and Nourishment he was Content to give his Body and Blood, how can it be once thought that the least Spark of that Divine Fire which glow'd so strongly in our Saviour's Breast dwells in ours, that we have any thing of that Love for one another that he had for us all; and how plain and unquestionable is it that we have not! How do we imitate God, or Act by that Spirit of Goodness and Kindness by which he became Incarnate and Suffer'd Death for us! And thus *how dwelleth the Love of God in us!*

But besides the Chain of the Context, there is a Parallel Text in St. *John* that will further Confirm our Interpretation of this. As he says here, that neglecting the needs of our Brethren is an Argument that we have not the Love of God dwelling in us, so elsewhere he says, *Joh.* 4. 12. that *if we do love one another God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected*

fected in us. *His Love*, that is, that ſame Love of God towards Men, which moved him to ſend his Son to be a Propitiation for their Sins, as appears from what goes before. Which Love of his is *Copied out*, *Imitated* and *Perfected* by us when we are kind and loving to our Fellow Creatures, even as the Sufferings of Chriſt are ſaid to be *Perfected* by us, when we Suffer after his Example, as Dr. *Hammond* expreſſes it in his Paraphraſe upon that Text. And ſo on the Contrary, when we do not ſhew this Brotherly Kindneſs, then this Love of God to Mankind is not Copied out, imitated or perfected by us, and ſo may be ſaid not to *dwell* in us, as in the Words before us.

This may ſerve to ſhew the Love of God in the Text to be at leaſt truly if not principally meant of *Charity*, that Tranſcendent Charity which was ſo Senſibly and Convincingly Expreſs'd in the Death and Paſſion of Chriſt for us. So that we have now gain'd another Senſe to be added to the other Two (for I do not intend to exclude them neither) and all put together will amount to thus much, that the Man of ſufficient Ability, but no Will to Relieve the Poor, has neither Charity or Good Will to Men dwelling in him, nor any true Love to God, nor is he belov'd by him. There are therefore Three Things here ſuppoſed to be ſaid of the Perſon of this Character, and ſo our Firſt General Propoſition more diſtinctly unfolded reſolves into theſe Three.

Firſt, *That our Rich Miſer that has Ability enough, but no Heart to Relieve the Poor, has no true Chriſtian Charity dwelling in him.*
Secondly, *That he has no true Love to God.*
Thirdly, *That neither is he belov'd by him.*

Theſe

Theſe are the Propoſitions I intend to ſpeak to from the Words, but before I do ſo, there are ſome qualifying Expreſſions in the Text that I muſt take Notice of for the Clearer handling of them. Whereof the Firſt is,

Whoſo hath this World's Good, that is, I ſuppoſe, he who by the good Providence and favourable Indulgence of God is in full and plentiful Circumſtances, who abounds and overflows with Worldly Bleſſings, in one Word, the *Rich* Man. But becauſe (*Rich*) is a Term of ſome uncertainty, and accordingly liable to Miſtake, which would be here of bad Conſequence where there is ſo much depending upon it, this being one of the *Cardinal* Expreſſions of the Text upon which the great Streſs and Weight of it reſts, I think it Neceſſary briefly to ſtate the Notion of Riches, and to ſhew who is properly to be underſtood by a *Rich Man*.

A Name which we no ſooner hear but there Commonly riſes in our Minds an Idea of one that has a large Eſtate and Great Poſſeſſions either in Money, Land, or ſome other Valuable Property. *Great*, not relatively Conſider'd or with Proportion to the Condition of the Owner (whoſe Circumſtances are ſeldom taken into the Account) but Abſolutely regarded, or compared with the Poſſeſſions of other Men. We don't uſe to trouble our ſelves with the Conſideration of the Man's Circumſtances, 'tis ſufficient that he has ſuch a great Eſtate to call him a Rich Man, and we look no further. Now though Greatneſs of Eſtate may make a Rich Man in a *Natural* Senſe, yet certainly in a *Moral* Eſtimation to be Rich is a *Relative* thing, and ſignifies not the having that which is a great deal in it ſelf, but which is ſo to him that has it, with reſpect to his Condition, Circumſtances and Occaſions. And he

is

is truly the Rich Man, not that *has* a great deal, but that can *ſpare* a great deal; and he is Richeſt, not that has ſimply and abſolutely Moſt, but that has moſt to Spare; not that has the greateſt *Eſtate*, but the greateſt *Superfluity*. For we'll ſuppoſe two Men, one that has indeed a great Eſtate, but at the ſame time, either by reaſon of his Quality or ſome Eminent Station that he holds either in the Church or State, ſuch great Occaſions, that he can Save little or nothing out of it, having but juſt enough to bear out his Neceſſary Part. Another again that has a far leſs Eſtate, but who withal has by far Fewer Occaſions, Lives Privately and within himſelf, and ſo can ſave a great deal out of his little. The Queſtion is which of theſe is the Richer Man. The Firſt no doubt Popularly ſpeaking and in a Natural Senſe, as having the greateſt Eſtate; but ſure Morally ſpeaking the Latter, becauſe he has more in Proportion to his Occaſions than the other has in Proportion to his, that is, he has more to *him* though not Abſolutely ſo much, and ſo has a greater Superfluity, though a leſs Income. This I take Notice of, that thoſe who are Rich only in the Second Senſe may not think themſelves unconcerned in what St. *John* ſays of him that *has this World's Good*, merely becauſe they are not Men of great Eſtates, though otherwiſe Never ſo abounding with regard to their more private Circumſtances, and leſs craving Occaſions. So much for the firſt qualifying Expreſſion. The Next is,

And ſeeth his Brother hath need; This is well added becauſe it meets with the Pretence that is commonly pleaded by Uncharitable Men. They pretend Ignorance of their Neighbour's Neceſſities, and when the diſtreſſed Supplicants would make them better Known, they think it enough to diſcharge them-

hemselves of their troublesome Guests and their Duty too, to tell them, that the World is full of Cheats, and that there are a great many Counterfeits about the Country, and they have no Assurance but that they are of that Number, and therefore they think it neither Prudent nor Charitable to give at such Uncertainties. And I do not deny but that in some Cases this may be true, though withal I question not but that too many Cover over their real Covetousness and Hard-heartedness with this Veil of pretended Prudence. However to obviate all Shifts and Excuses St. *John* takes away this old Refuge, by supposing his Rich Man whom he afterwards Charges with Uncharity for not relieving his Necessitous Brother, to see and be sufficiently satisfy'd and assured that he *is in need*. After which it follows, *And shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him*, that is, that stifles those common Movements of Pity, those tender Relentings, those inward Stirrings of Humanity which arise even in the most Cruel and Insensible Breasts, and would even *Mechanically* incline them to Acts of Mercy and Charity, if they would but stand Neuter, and leave Nature to her own Workings. But he will not, but strives against them, fortifies his yielding Spirit, and industriously hardens himself both against his own Compassion and the Miseries of the Poor Supplicant, is deaf to his Complaints, blind to the Marks of his Poverty, and *Shuts* first his *Heart*, then his *Purse*, and then his *Door* against him.

But if this be his *Behaviour*, what is his *Religion*, or where is it, or to what purpose serves it, or what is himself or others the better for it, or how shall we believe he has any, and particularly let me ask him St. *John*'s Question, *How dwelleth the Love of God in him?*

And

And First, How dwelleth the Love of God in him, according to the First Sense of the Love of God, as it denotes true Christian Charity! Can such a one pretend to any thing of this? 'Tis most sure that he justly cannot, and unless his Forehead be as hard as his Heart, sure he will not. But if he does, let him but Consider what the *Nature* and what the *Measure* of Charity is. As for the Nature of Charity, there is Nothing more plain and undisputed, since all the World understands by it such a Habit or Temper of Mind as disposes a Man to wish well and do well to all his Fellow Creatures according to their several Needs, and his own Opportunities. Wherein it is at once distinguish'd from, and advanc'd above the Vertue of *Justice*, which is concern'd no further than to render Men what they have a Civil Right to, and can legally Claim as their Due. Whereas by Charity we mean something more than paying Reckonings, and striking off Scores. 'Tis not only to do Men Right, but to do them Good, not only that which the Law requires, but which Reason dictates, not only what they can Challenge, but what they Need. This is the *Nature* of Charity. Now as for the *Measure* of it I find the Scripture makes it twofold. *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy Self*; *Lev.* 19. 18. This is the Measure of the old Law. To which our Saviour adds a New one, *Joh.* 13. 34. *A new Commandment give I unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* So then we are to love one another, First, as we love our selves, that is with the same kind Affection and Benevolence, and in all the Reality, Cordialness, Sincerity and Constancy of it, having a Fellow-Sense with our Brethren in every thing, rejoycing in their Happiness, and Sympathizing with them in their Afflictions, and not only doing no more *against* them than

than we would be willing they should do against us, but also being ready to do as much *for* them, as we would be willing they should do for us. Secondly, As Christ Jesus lov'd us all, that is, with that Noble and Generous, disinterested and unselfish kind of Love which our Tender Redeemer had, when for us Men, and for our Salvation he came down from Heaven and Suffer'd upon Earth, and did such things for us as Angels Consider with Wonder, and Devils with Envy, such as our Invention could never Contrive, such as our Hope could never look for, and such as our Faith can even now hardly Believe, but is ever now and then apt to break forth into the Language of the Surprized Virgin, *How can these things be!* Why thus also ought we to love one another, with the most Heroick and Divine Affection, so as to be ready to Sacrifice even our very *Lives* for the sake of our Brethren, as it is in the Verse before the Text, *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us, and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.*

But now if this be Charity and the Measure of it, how Infinitely short does he come of it, and with what Face can he pretend to it, who has this World's Good, and sees his Brother in Need, and yet shuts up his Bowels of Compassion from him! For is this to be kindly Affected towards him, and to bear a hearty good Will to him? Is this to love him as *himself*, and to be as sensible of, and as Concern'd for his Interest as he is for his own? Do we use to serve our dear selves at this rate, or would we be so treated by others? No, the Man loves himself a little otherwise, it being only upon a Mistaken Supposition of Self-advantage that he thus uses his distressed Brother. But then I ask again, is this to love his Brother as *himself*? Is it, when he sets himself and his

his own supposed Interest so far before that of his Brother, as rather then break a round Sum, or diminish never so little from a Plentiful Store (though it be like taking a Drop out of the Ocean) rather than put himself to the least inconvenience, though it be no more than even the very Trouble of Giving, (for that also I have Known to be the Case) to let a poor destitute Creature, and perhaps a Person of much greater Worth than himself either languish and perish before his Eyes, or ligh on in a Life of such Extremity as is worse than Death! If this be to *have* Charity, what is it to be *without* it, and who but a Mere *Devil* can possibly want it? I say a Mere Devil, for I can see nothing more but a Spirit of Malice, and taking delight in the Miseries of Men that can be added to this most wretched indifferency concerning their Welfare, which certainly is as far remov'd from true Charity, as it is from that Love which every one bears to himself. And yet this is all that Men of this Complexion have to say for themselves, and 'tis the very Plea they commonly make. They say, and they very Solemnly thank God for it, that they are in Charity with all the World, meaning that they bear no Body any *Malice* or *Ill Will*. And many an Old Trembling Miser has Reposed himself upon this sorry Crutch, and very gravely Comforted himself with this Formal Protestation upon his Dying Bed, and so gone to the Devil with good Satisfaction. But this is to prove one's Self a good Christian because one is not a Devil. For when all's done, that's the best that can be said of such a Wretch, He is *not a Devil*; but to allow him to be a good Man would be too great a Reproach to Human Nature.

Much less then can he pretend to the Charities of a *Suffering God*, who has not so much as the Compassions

passions of a good-Natur'd Man. The Charity of Christ went so far as to lay down his Life for us, and (as little as we think of it) that's the Charity which by Vertue of his New Commandment we owe one another, even to lay down our Lives for our Brethren, when there is a due Occasion for so dear a Sacrifice. But can it be expected that *he* should ever rise up to that Noble and Divine Pitch of Charity, that has not a Heart so much as to give an *Alms*? What! will that Man ever part with his *Life*, the Foundation of all his Temporal Enjoyments, that will not so much as part with a little *Money* for the Relief of those whose Wants he sees and knows, but neither Feels nor Considers? Will he ever Sacrifice *himself* for his Brother, after the Example of our Generous Lord, that will not do so much, I will not say, as miss a Meal, or part with a Convenience for his Sake, for that would imply some Trouble in it, but even to spare him some of his Overflowings, some of his *Burthen*, something of that Abundance which breaks his Sleep, distracts his Head, and is even a trouble to him to Possess? No certainly, he that loves *Self* so much even in its *Excrements* and Superfluities, will be sure to love it too well in its Fund and Bottom *(Life)* ever to be guilty of so Expensive a Charity. But where then is that Excellent Spirit of Goodness, Love and Divine *Philanthropy* which was in the Incarnate Word, the Suffering, Bleeding, Dying Redeemer of the World? Not in our Covetous Wretch to be sure, who refusing to Communicate a little of his Worldly Substance to those for whom our Lord Jesus Sacrific'd his Life, shews himself to be at the furthest distance from the Temper and Practice of that Divine Lover, and that he has not the least Portion of his Excellent Spirit resting upon him. And indeed he may as well pretend to

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the Purity of an Angel, as to the Charity of a Christian. However perhaps he may make it up some other way, and particularly in the way of *Devotion* and *Religion*. But besides that this would signify nothing without Christian Charity, I shall now go on to shew,

Secondly, *That as he wants* that, *so he has no true Love to God neither.* This is the Common Retreat, and last Reserve of Covetous Rich Men. They are too Sensible of their want of Love to Men to make any great boasts on that side, and 'twould be to no purpose if they should, when their whole Behaviour is such a visible Proof of the Contrary. But then you shall have them pretend highly to the Love of God, and set up for Men of Extraordinary Devotion and Piety, for no other Reason that I can imagine but only because 'tis the Cheaper and less Expensive Service of the two. But not to Mind these Men of a saying in St. *John* which none are more concern'd in than themselves, *He that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? Joh.* 4. 20. Nor that Acts of Charity are also Acts of Religion, according to those two remarkable places of Scripture, *to do good and to Communicate forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleas'd*, *Heb.* 13. 16. and *Pure Religion and Undefiled*, &c. *Jam.* 1. 27. and that therefore 'tis to no purpose to talk of being Religious without them; nor yet of that Expression of our Saviour, *Mat.* 25. 45. *In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me*; a Passage which will hereafter Eternally stop the Mouths of all those pretended Votaries to the Person of Christ, who yet shew no regard to his poor Members, and therefore ought as much to silence them Now; I say not to argue with them upon these Measures which yet are sufficient to Cast

and Condemn them, I would only know of them what they mean by the Love of God, or with what sort of Love it is that they Love him. Not I presume with Love of *Benevolence*; For since they will not bestow it upon their Fellow-Creatures, whose Wants and Miseries render'd them but too proper Objects of it, sure they will not pretend to bestow it upon the Blessed God, whose Perfect and Unincreaseable Happiness makes him utterly uncapable of, because it sets him Infinitely above such a Love. By the Love of God therefore they must mean (if they understand either Sense or themselves) Love of *Desire*; That they seek Union with God as their true and Soveraign Good, as their End and Beatific Object, and that their general Desire of Happiness is fix'd and lodg'd in him as the real Cause of it. But now if they do indeed thus Love God, then since God has so abundantly promised not only many great Rewards, but even *Himself* as *the* great Reward to those that Consider and Relieve the Necessities of the Poor, how comes it to pass that when they Know their Wants, and are well able to Relieve them, yet they will not? Do not these Men plainly prefer their Money before the Enjoyment of God, whom they would rather lose for ever, than be for the Present a little the *Poorer* for his Sake! And is this to Love God, to Love him as God, with a Love Worthy of him, or that shall be thought Worthy to enjoy him, or indeed to receive the least Reward from him, I say is it to Love God, to value him at such a Rate, to Postpone him so far to the things of the World as to be unwilling to lay out a little Money for so vast a Purchase, to be at a little Charge to have the Eternal Enjoyment of so Soveraign a good? If this be to Love God, then *Judas* loved Christ when he held the Scale so uneven between

tween him and the World as to let him be outweigh'd by Thirty Pieces of Silver. But these Men I suppose will not say that *Judas* was a true Lover of Christ, and with what Modesty then can they assume the Title of Lovers of God, whom they equally *undervalue*, though for want of Opportunity and Capacity they do not equally *Betray*? But we need not be further nice upon the Matter, 'tis visible to the Eye without *Measuring* it, that the Religion of these Men does not rise one jot higher than their Charity, and tho' they make greater Prerences to the Love of God than to the Love of Men, 'tis plain they love one no better than the other, and as plain that they love their Money better than both, which it seems they would much rather keep than either Relieve the Poor, or enjoy their Maker. And *how* then *dwelleth the Love of God in them*? 'Tis indeed almost enough to make a Man Sick of Religion to hear such Men pretend to it. Talk of Loving God? Their Money they mean, for they love nothing else that I know of, and that they *Idolize*, Sacrificing their Affections to it here, and their Souls to it for an *Eternal Hereafter*. For this it will come to, and this will be the Conclusion of him who has this World's Good, and sees his Brother has Need, and shuts up his Bowels of Compassion from him. Which brings me to Consider that as such a One has no true Christian Charity dwelling in him, nor any true Love to God, so neither,

Thirdly, *Is he Beloved by him.* Here methinks I might be Excused all further Trouble upon this Part, even in the Judgment of our Covetous Rich Man himself, who however he may Usurp the Character of a *Lover* of God when he wants Charity to his Brother, yet one would think should never abuse himself with a Conceit of being the *Object* of God's

Love and Favour when he wants both the Former. For is it Conceivable that God should Love him that has neither Charity to Men, his Fellow Creatures, nor Love to Himself, his Creator? Can God possibly Love a Creature so Irregular in his Affections, so degenerate even from himself, so far alienated from the Divine Life, so wholly subdued to that of Sense, so inamour'd of a little glittering Clay, and so all over devoted to the World as to make a God of it, and serve it with that intireness of Zeal and Affection which He that is so can only Challenge? That is, in short, can God Love an *Idolater?* For such the Apostle tells us every Covetous Man is. But besides, can we suppose it possible that God (as much Love as he is) should love a Creature so utterly unlike himself, and who is of a Nature so little resembling his own? What, can God, who is such a Good, Bountiful, Self-Communicative, Self-diffusive, universalized Being, that out of Love Created a World, and out of greater love Redeem'd it, even at the Price of his Son's Blood, I say can such a Noble Generous Being as this, love one that is of the quite opposite Character, that is altogether as Strait, Contracted, Selfish and Illiberal; and that is so far from laying down his Life for his Brother's Good, that he will not so much as Sacrifice some of his Superfluous Dirt, (not to say the pleasure of a Meal or a Bottle) to his greatest Extremity? And is it possible for God to have any Love or Kindness for such a Wretch as this? It would be in vain for such a one to have recourse to the Infinite Goodness and Love of God, for the more loving God is, the less lovely will such a Creature appear to him, because the more *unlike* him, and consequently the less Worthy of his Love. Reason therefore will Warrant us to Conclude that he shall not have it, and so will

Scripture

Scripture too, which in expreſs Terms declares that God hates the Covetous; For ſo the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 10. 3. *The Wicked boaſts of his Heart's deſire, and bleſſeth the Covetous whom the Lord abhors.* We may therefore put St *John*'s Queſtion concerning ſuch a one in this laſt Senſe as well as in the two former, *How dwelleth the Love of God in him?*

But if the Love of God does not dwell in him that does not impart of what is his own, what ſhall we then ſay of thoſe who wrongfully invade or detain what belongs to others! Thoſe particularly who defraud poor Labourers of their Hire, who oppreſs and grind the Poor inſtead of relieving them, and above all thoſe who Corrupt and Abuſe Publick Benefactions and Places of Hereditary Charity, ſuch as *Hoſpitals* and *Almes-Houſes*——. I ſay what ſhall we ſay of thoſe Birds of Prey which turn theſe Publick Benefactions into private Advantages, and raiſe ample Preferments for themſelves out of a Common Charity. Truly I know not what to ſay of them better than what St. *Jude* ſays of another ſort of Wicked Men, that *they are Spots in our Feaſts of Charity, feeding themſelves without Fear*, and I can hardly forbear going on with the reſt of the Character.

But to return to our Rich Covetous Men, I think after all this I need not go to prove to them that Almes-giving is a Duty particularly incumbent upon them, ſince without it they have neither Chriſtian Charity, nor any true Love to God, nor are beloved by him. For do not theſe Conſiderations ſufficiently bind it upon them, both in point of Conſcience, and in point of Intereſt too? But where are the Rich Men that have a due Senſe of their Obligations in this Matter? I muſt needs ſay that though they are the moſt *Able*, and ſo the moſt *Obliged*, yet they are the leaſt *Willing*, and that generally ſpeak-

ing they do the leaſt Good of any ſort of Men in the World. And they have got a Morality among them ſuitable to their Practice. They generally think that if they are not of the Number of thoſe I laſt ſpoke of, if they do not wrong any Body, but are Juſt in their Dealings, and pay every one their own, 'tis at their Liberty whether they will do any Works of Mercy and Charity or not, and that they may make as much of themſelves, and as little of others as they pleaſe. But beſides that by the Tenor of this whole Diſcourſe it appears that they have not this Liberty, let me further tell them, that there is not that difference between *Charity* and *Juſtice* that they imagine. There is indeed this difference between them, that the Object of my Juſtice has a Right to demand, as well as I an Obligation to do, whereas the Object of my Charity has no ſuch Right. But then let me tell thoſe that plead this, that though this makes a great Difference in a Court of Juſtice, yet it makes none at all in the Court of Conſcience, they being as much bound by the Laws of Chriſt to do acts of Charity as acts of Juſtice. The Obligation is the ſame on their ſide, though the Right be not the ſame on the other ſide, which is a Difference that Concerns the *Object* of Charity only, and not the *Beſtower* of it, who gets nothing by the Diſtinction.

For after all I would fain know whether Acts of Charity are not as much commanded by the Religion of Chriſt, and made as Neceſſary to Salvation as Acts of Juſtice! And if they are, what does it ſignifie that they cannot be Claim'd as a Right by thoſe to whom they are due, nor Extorted by *Forms* of *Law*? Are they the leſs obliging in *Conſcience*? Surely No. And how then thoſe who make Conſcience of being Juſt, and would by no means play the Knave,

Knave, ſhould yet ſatisfie themſelves in living ſo wholly to themſelves, and doing no good to thoſe whoſe Needs and whoſe Prayers too beſpeak their Charity, is a Myſtery every one has not Head enough to Comprehend.

But why do I reaſon with Men who want not ſo much to be *Diſcours'd*, as to be *Awaken'd*? and to this purpoſe I would only deſire them to conſider with me the Parable of the Rich Man in the Goſpel, (*Luke* 16. 19.) which if well minded, is enough to make all the Rich Miſers upon Earth to Tremble. *There was a certain Rich Man, &c.* ſays the Text. But it does not ſay that he was inrich'd by the Goods of others; he is not charged with Injuſtice, or Oppreſſion, or Extortion, or Adultery, nor with any other ſort of Debauchery, no not ſo much as with any Intemperance in the uſe of his good things, as far as the Health and good State of his Bodywas concern'd. No, 'tis only ſaid of him, That *he was cloathed in Purple and fine Linnen, and fared ſumptuouſly every Day*, and that he ſuffered poor *Lazarus* to lie unregarded at his Gate. He it ſeems was one of thoſe good honeſt Men (as they call them) that liv'd well, and kept a good Table, and were kind to their Friends, (that is, to thoſe who don't need it) and to themſelves, and that's all. He was (for ought that appears to the contrary) harmleſs and inoffenſive, did no body any hurt, but would eat and drink well, live ſoft and warm, and wear fine Cloaths, and (let the World go how it would) be ſure to take care of one, but concerning himſelf no further, and never thought of doing any good, or of communicating, even out of his Superfluity, to thoſe who were in Diſtreſs. This is his Character, and the worſt of it, and yet the next News that we hear of him is, that he is in Hell and in Torment. And is this the

end of a Man, otherwise Just and Innocent, merely because he was wanting in Works of Charity? What then do our Rich Misers think will become of them? And how can they chuse but conclude from hence that 'tis expected they should do good with what they have as well as forbear doing hurt, and that if they are not *Charitable*, they may go to Hell with all their *Justice* and *Sobriety*.

Nor is *any* Charity sufficient. They ought not only to give to the Poor, but to give *liberally*, and as the Apostle says, 1 *Tim.* 6. 18. to be *Rich in good Works*, or else also *how dwells the Love of God in them*? For who should be liberal and open-handed if not they to whom Heaven has been so? And for what end has God given them such Plenty, but that they should do good with it, and be helpful to those who are in hard Circumstances, in Proportion to their Ability? Rich Men are under a great Mistake here also. They think if they do but now and then give an Alms at their Doors, and with a little Money or a Meals Meat relieve a present actual Want, they have done a notable piece of Charity, and made God their Debtor. And perhaps he might be so to another of less Ability, but sure not to them, who as they have Abundance, so they ought to abound in their Alms accordingly; not only satisfie a present Want, but put Men into a condition of *not wanting*. Not that these Measures are to be used at a Venture, and to all Comers, but with Choice and Discretion, and where they meet with proper Objects. And such a good Man that had much Wealth would diligently seek out for, first among his Poor Relations, if he has any such, then among his Friends and Neighbours, and then among those of the best Merit and Character abroad, as far as his Sphere would well extend: And where-ever

he

he found a due Object for his Charity (such as a decay'd Gentleman suppose, or a poor House-keeper with an Honest Mind and Laborious Hand contending against a hard Fortune) there he would be very bountiful and kind, either by giving him a large Sum, or (which indeed is a neater, and full as beneficial a way) by lending him Money without Interest, or by selling him a great quantity of Goods at half the Value, or by over-rewarding his Labour, or by some other way which his well-disposed Heart would easily help his Head to contrive. Oh what a World of Good might Rich Men do, if they had any Goodness in them!

But I must mind them of one thing more, which is, that they ought to distribute their Charities not only liberally but *seasonably*. I mean not only in respect of those whose Necessities they relieve, by doing it quickly, and without importunity, and when it may do them the greatest Service, but also in respect of *themselves*. That they do good and distribute their Benevolence in the time of their Youth and Health, and during the following course of their Lives, when they have power otherwise to imploy it, and not live miserably and like *Hogs* all their Lives long, and then think to Compound for all by leaving a Rich *Legacy* behind them, or founding an *Hospital* when they come to die. Thank them for nothing. They keep their Hands upon their Purses as long as they can, and when Death bids them deliver, and they can hold their dear Treasure no longer, then with great Formality they make a *Will*, and pretend to *give*. They bequeath their Goods to the Poor, just as they do their Souls to God, because they are going, and won't make any further Stay with them. But I fear such a Death-Bed Charity is too near a-kin to a Death-bed Repentance, to be either

ther much valued, or much depended upon. No, if they will be Charitable indeed, let them be so while they Live, and afterwards Die as Charitably as they please.

And now methinks the bare Pleasure and Satisfaction of doing Good, if the Men I'm speaking of had but a true Taste and Relish of it, should be a sufficient Motive to put them upon all this, though they had no regard to Duty and Conscience, or the Retributions of another World. But when they shall be further told what a mighty stress the Scripture every where lays upon this Duty of *Alms-giving*, which is so eminent a part of Charity that it has in a manner ingross'd the Name of it, what a Multitude of Sins it will Cover, what a Figure it will make at the last Judgment (the great Inquest of which it seems is to be about it) and what large Rewards are promised to it in both Worlds, Methinks instead of waiting to be ask'd, or patiently Suffering a poor Petition, they themselves should turn Beggars, and Court the Poor, even in their own Language, for *God's Sake*, to receive their Alms, and to let them deposite some of their perishing Wealth in their Hands upon Earth, that they might receive for it in Exchange an incorruptible Treasure in Heaven. Who can hear those Strange Words, *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me:* And, *Prov.* 19. 17. *He that hath pity upon the Poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given he will pay him again.* I say who can hear such things as these, and see his Brother in want, and shut up his Bowels of Compassion from him, when he has this World's Good, and is well able to relieve him? Especially if he hear him plead in his dear Redeemer's Name that dy'd upon the Cross for us, that Name of Love and Wonder,

Wonder, that Sweet and Adorable Name that carries so many Mysteries of Goodness and Mercy in its sound, what Heart can then resist, what Hand can then with-hold! For however in other Cases it be too true what *Solomon* observes, that the Words of the Poor are not much regarded, yet certainly there is no Rhetorick so Powerful, so Commanding, as that of a Poor Man begging in the Name of *Jesus Christ*.

But I am sensible all this is but mere *Cant* to our Rich Miser, who has a Heart that will serve him to hear a Thousand Lectures about Charity without the least damage to his Pocket. For as for the Pleasure of doing Good he understands it Not, he has no Notion of the Matter, nor will the Spectacles wherewith he tells his Money, help him to see Jesus Christ in a Poor Man. And as for being rewarded in another World, and lending to God to be hereafter repaid with Interest, He is not for this *Spiritual* Sort of Usury, but looks upon what is lent to God as little better than a *Desperate Debt*. The plain Truth of it is he does not like his *Security*, but thinks a *Mortgage* is better.

And what shall we do now with such *truly Miserable* Wretches as these, who do not believe enough of another World to do any good in this, or what shall we further say to them? They have more need to be pray'd for in our Churches among the Sick, and distemper'd in Mind, than to be Preach'd to, and to be Commended to the Grace of God, than to the Discourses of Men. There then I leave them, to the Divine Mercy, and to the World's Pity, for sure they are in all Senses the Most *Miserable* Creatures in it. In the Mean while if there be any thing truely Great and Happy here below, 'tis he First that bears his Poverty Contentedly, and he next

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that Relieves it Generouſly. I End all with thoſe preſſing Words of the Apoſtle, *Charge them that are rich in this World that they be not highminded, nor truſt in uncertain Riches, but in the Living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That they do Good, that they be Rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to Communicate. Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the time to Come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life*, 1 Tim. 6. 17. Which God of his Mercy grant us all for the Sake of Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit be all Honour and Glory for ever. *Amen.*

A Diſcourſe Concerning the Right Uſe of the World.

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1 COR. vij. 31.

——*And they that Uſe this World; as not Abuſing it.*

NExt to the Everlaſting Puniſhments of the other World there is nothing ſo truly dreadful to a duly inlightned Spirit, as the paſſing Dangers of this, and that becauſe theſe Dangers lead to thoſe Puniſhments. When we hear of the Dangers of the World, we commonly think of thoſe things which threaten either our *Lives* or our *Fortunes*, that tend either to remove us out of the World, or to make us Poor and Miſerable in it.

it. These appear to us as the only Dangers, and according as we are secure from these, so far we reckon our Selves and our Condition *Safe*. And this Sentiment of our Heart (as it usually happens) is got into our Language. Thus we say of one that he is taken very dangerously Ill, and of another that his House was seiz'd with a very dangerous Fire. Whereas in a true Estimation of things Health and Prosperity are the Greater Dangers, and however it might Sound to a Popular and Worldly Ear, an Angel would readily understand me, and so would a Wise Man too, if I should say, such a one is very *dangerously well*, and of another, that he is very *dangerously Rich* and *Great*. We may and Commonly do fright our Selves with Imaginary Terrors, but when all's done there is no Danger in the World like living in it, and having much of it, and did Men enter it at a Mature Age, and with as much Thought and Reflection as they leave it, they would be more afraid to be Born than they are to Die.

St. *Austin* frequently Compares the World to a *Sea*, and our Church alludes to the same Figure in the Office of Baptism, when She prays for the little Infant Voyager, *That he may so pass the Waves of this Troublesome World as finally to come to the Land of Everlasting Life*. Here we have a Representation of the two Worlds under the lively Images of *Sea* and *Land*. That Hereafter is *Land*, Safe, Stable and Immoveable, fit for a fix'd Dwelling and Abode, even that Eternal Rest which remains for the People of God, *Heb.* 4. 9. But at Present all is *Sea*, and a troubled one too, a Sea in a Storm, rolling and working with a furious, unconstant and dangerous Motion, or rather whose Calms are worse than Storms. Some are but *Coasters* in this great Sea, like the first Artless Sailers that Steer'd their wary Course with-

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in View of Land, and these are they of Private Life and little Fortune; while other more Venturous but often less happy Mariners, Men of High Rank and Publick Station, strike out more Freely into the unfaithful Deep, committing their larger Vessels to the Winds and Floods. Which of these is safer is not easier to say than that all is full of Danger, there being not any Part or Degree of Depth in this great Ocean which has not proved fatal to many a Shipwreck'd Passenger.

So very numerous and thick-laid are the Temptations of the World, that where-ever a Man sets his Foot he can hardly help treading upon a Gin or Snare, and so corrupt the very common Air, that to breathe is almost to draw in Infection. St. *John* tells us there is nothing in the World but the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, and all these are dangerous Temptations, which may make us the less wonder at what he says of it elsewhere, that it *lies all in wickedness*. For how should it be otherwise in a World so full of, so altogether made up, and as it were *consisting* of Dangers, and where to set aside all others, that of *Common Conversation* alone is enough to corrupt the best Complexion'd Soul among the Heirs of *Adam*. The ordinary Discourses of Men (even those which go for Innocent) are nothing else but effusions of that Vanity, Pride and Concupiscence that lie deep in their Hearts; from the abundance of which their Mouths speak, and by this their evil Communication they corrupt good Manners. What Company shall a Man go into from which he will not come away worse than he came? Men transfuse their Passions into their Discourses, and by them into their Hearers. They communicate their Vices at the same time, and in the same Vehicles, that they convey their Thoughts; and

and infect one another, as other Diseased Persons do by their *Breath.*

Upon Consideration of these things some have thought it necessary to *Retire*, and not content with Renouncing the Pomps and Vanities of the World in their Vow of Baptism, have added to it another, that of Renouncing the World it self. They thought they could not live innocently in the World, and therefore were resolved to leave it; as those who cannot enjoy their Health in the City withdraw into the Country. And indeed if we cannot avoid an Evil by separating the Effect from the Cause, we must then avoid the Cause it self: For there are but those two ways of declining any Evil. The latter way is that which is taken by the Votaries of Solitude, they avoid the *Cause.* But the Apostle here supposes the other expedient, which is by *separating* the *Effect* from the Cause. For as bad as the World is there is no necessity either of not using it or of abusing it; since the Abuse may be separated from the Use, and we may use the World without abusing it, as the Apostle intimates in the Words of the Text, ——— *And they that use this World as not abusing it.*

The Apostle had been before Discoursing of certain particular States and Duties of Life, and comes now to something of more general Concernment, which is to read all Christians a Lecture of Caution and Indifferency in the Application of themselves to the things of this World. And perhaps it is the strictest, and runs the highest of any in the New Testament. *Brethren*, says he, *the time is short*, both that of the World it self, and that of our Abode in it, *it remaineth that both they that have Wives, be as tho' they had none; and they that weep, as tho' they wept not; and they that rejoyce, as tho' they rejoyced not;*

not; and they that buy, as tho' they possessed not. As much as to say, there is nothing considerable enough in so transient a State, where the Scenes open and shut so fast, to be very much lov'd or very much fear'd. Nothing worth being troubled much at, or rejoycing much for, or delighting much in. And therefore 'tis but just and decorous you should be very sparing and indifferent in the indulgency of your Passions, in your Love, and in your Grief, and in your Joy; and withal so moderate in your adhesions to what you possess as if you had nothing to call your own. After an enumeration of which Particulars, he collects and winds up all into this general Conclusion, ——*And they that use this World as not abusing it.*

They that use this World. 'Tis observable here that St. *Paul* does not oblige Men either to use the World, or not to use it. This is matter of mere Discretion, and accordingly wholly left to their Liberty. Only 'tis Reasonable here that Men should be so just and true to themselves and their best Interests, as to act by the same Measures for their Souls as they do for their Bodies; and that therefore they would avoid a World that endangers their Innocency, as much as they would a Place that incommodes their Health. But every Man must be judge for himself when that is, and therefore must be left at Liberty whether he will live and converse in the World or not, according as in his own Discretion, upon a serious deliberation of the matter, he shall judge most expedient. Men are not ty'd to live in the World, or to Cloyster themselves from it, the only point of Duty and Obligation upon them is, that they take care that this their Liberty prove not a Snare to them; and that while they use the World, they do not abuse it. This therefore being the Duty of

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the Text, for the better consideration and inforcement of it, I shall endeavour to shew,

1. *What it is to abuse the World.*
2. *Upon what account it concerns us to beware of this Abuse.*

Now as to the First, By the abuse of a Thing, when we speak strictly, we mean the unlawful use of a Thing, which therefore always includes the simple use of it. And accordingly, we cannot be said to *abuse* what we do not so much as *use*. But in a more large and popular acceptation of the Word, we are then said to abuse a thing when we behave our selves any ways disorderly about it, whether it be by enjoying it as an End, when it ought only to be used as a Means, or by using it as a Means when it ought to be enjoyed as an End; or lastly, by using it as a Means to an End that is not due.

The World is not capable of being abused in the second way. God only can be thus abused; and we do actually put this Abuse upon him whenever, instead of referring all things to him, we very preposterously refer him to other things; as they do, who make use of Religion as an Instrument to serve the Ends of Secular Policy. As when a Man enters into Holy Orders only for the sake of Preferment, or goes to Church out of a pretence of Devotion, when his real Business is to stare upon a handsome Face, or make an Assignation. Thus we abuse *God*, by using him when we should enjoy him. The two other ways are the ways of abusing *Creatures*, when we either *enjoy* them, or *misuse* them; when we place our End in them, or pervert them to such Ends to which they have no Natural Ordination. I conceive then there may be these two general Ways of abusing the World.

1. *By making it an End.*
2. *By using it as a means to a wrong End.*

First, *By making it an End.* St. *Austin* has long since resolved all Immorality into these two Fundamental Disorders. The enjoying what we should use, and the using what we should enjoy. *Tom. 4. p. 207.* *Omnis Humana perversio est*, says he, *fruendis uti velle, atq; utendis frui*; to which he should have added to make his Division complete, the using what ought to be used to an ill End, and then he would have given us a full distribution of Immorality, to which all the Instances of it might be reduced. But we are at present concern'd only with the first of these, the *enjoying* what we should *use*; between which two St. *Austin* *Ibid.* makes this difference, That we are said to enjoy that thing from which we take Pleasure, and to use that which we refer to that from whence we take Pleasure. And elsewhere, *Tom. 3. p. 4.* *To enjoy*, says he, *is to cleave with Love to a Thing for it self, but to use is to refer the Thing used to the obtaining what we Love.* Whereby it appears, that by enjoying, St. *Austin* means the same as to make an *End* of a thing, and by using to make a *Means* of it. And if what we enjoy be really an End, and what we use be really a Means, then we are right and orderly in our procedure; but if we enjoy as an End what ought only to be used as a means, or used as a Means what ought to be enjoy'd as an End, then we pervert and transpose the Nature and Order of things, and are guilty of Disorder and Abuse.

And thus it is when we make an End of the World; for then we make an End of that which is no more than a Means, and *enjoy* that which ought only to be *used*. For the World is not *our* End, whatever it may be to Creatures below us. We were not made for its

its Enjoyments, nor can we be ever truly, or so much as in our own Opinion, Happy in them. I say, in our own Opinion. For indeed, Men are ready enough to think one another Happy, and to envy one another upon that occasion; but no Man ever thought *himself* so. 'Tis true indeed they think they *shall* be so, and after the Disappointments and Abuses of one Pleasure live on in expectation of being more kindly serv'd by another, so supporting themselves by their Variety among their thin Entertainments, as the sinking Bird holds up her weight by renewing her Strokes in the yielding Air. But 'tis most certain that all this is but mere Amusement. They keep their Spirits from sinking by it, as the Bird does her Body, and that's all. For when the Future Delight comes to be Present, and the promising Reversion falls into hand, it will be found as empty and vain as any of those tryed Nothings that went before. We may amuse our selves a while with Dreams and Fancies, but there is a Thirst in the Soul of Man which all the little Cisterns of the Creation can never quench, an Emptiness which they can never fill. God only can do that, and therefore he only is our End. He has made us for himself, and accordingly has given us Desires which none but himself can ever satisfie. And therefore if we make the World our End, 'tis plain that we set the Creature in the place of God, are guilty of the highest Idolatry, transgress the Laws of Truth, Order and Reason, mistake our Centre, deceive our selves, and *abuse* the *World*.

And this those do, not only who are guilty of a full and downright acquiescence in the World, reposing themselves upon it as upon a Centre, seeking Rest and Satisfaction in it, that have no Prospect beyond it, but bound their Desires, their Hopes and Fears, and their whole Expectation within its narrow Limits, but also who love and adhere to it for it self, and embrace

it as a true real Good. For this is to make it an *End*, though not perhaps our *Last* and *Greatest* End. For nothing is lovely for it self, and upon its own inward Goodness, but what is an End; and therefore though we do not terminate in the World and set up our final rest in it, yet if we Love it and Cleave to it as a *true Good*, and for it self, we may be properly said to make an end of it, or in the Language of Saint *Austin* to *Enjoy* it, who by Enjoying, as was observ'd before, means the very same thing, and who accordingly will not allow the World to be *Enjoy'd* or Lov'd as a true Good, but only to be *Used*, or referr'd to that which is so. *Utendum est hoc Mundo*, says he, *non fruendum. This World is to be Used, not Enjoy'd.* Which how well it agrees with that Philosophy which says that the Creatures are so far from being able to content us, or make us Happy, that they cannot so much as give us any one Pleasure by way of real Causes, but are, as to that, as so many dead empty Cyphers, and at the most serve but as Occasions of those grateful Sentiments which God, the true Source of all Happiness produces in us, and that therefore we are not to love or seek Union with them as our true Goods, or real Causes of our Happiness, but only to *Use* them and serve our *selves* of them as the Conditions and Occasions of it, I shall leave to be Consider'd by those who have leisure to enter into so nice a Meditation, while in the Mean time I go on to give an Account of the other *Abuse* of the World, which is,

Tom. 3. p. 5.

Secondly, *By using it as a Means to a Wrong End.* We are supposed here not to make the World an End in any Sense, and indeed 'tis a very Considerable degree of Self-regulation for a Man to proceed thus far, not to *Enjoy*, but only to *Use* the World. But let not him that is arriv'd to this pitch think himself secure from all further danger, since it is not sufficient not to

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make an end of the World it self, unless we also use it to a *Right* End. We are to make a *Right* Use of it, as well as to stay and detain our selves in the bare *Use* of it; otherwise we shall not answer the Caution of the Text, so to *Use* the World as not to *Abuse* it.

Now the End for which the World ought to be *Used* can be no other than that for which it was *Made*; And if we would know what that was, we need only Consider who it was that made it, since it is impossible that God, whose Perfections are Infinite, should act for any other End than Himself, who is therefore the *Final* as well as the *Efficient* Cause of all his Works: And so the Scripture represents it, *Prov.* 16. 4. *The Lord hath made all things for himself*, says the Wise Man. To which agrees that of St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 11. 36. *Of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be Glory for ever, Amen.* And again yet more Expressly, *Col.* 1. 16. *All things were Created* by him, and *for him.* Since then all things are made for God, who is the End as well as Founder of the Creation, 'tis plain that all things ought to be referr'd to him, and Consequently that if we would make a right Use of the World, we must Use it for God and for his Glory. According as we are also Exhorted by the same Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the Glory of God.* Wherein is also Comprehended the Good and Welfare of Human Society, it being for the Glory of God that his Creatures, whom he made for the Greatest and Supremest Happiness, even the Enjoyment of Himself, should be as Prosperous and Happy as may be, both in this Life and in the Next. So then we are to Use the World for the Honour and Glory of God, and for the true Interest and Welfare of Society, and accordingly not to Use it for these, or for Contrary Ends, is to Abuse it, as those do.

First, Who instead of imploying that Power, Interest, Authority, Station, Wealth or Grandeur which they have in the World for the Service of the Christian Church, and for the Incouragement of true Religion and Vertue, for the Advancement of God's Kingdom in the Hearts and Lives of Men, and the Righteousness thereof, Use all these for Contrary Purposes, to incourage Vice, or Vicious Principles, to pervert Men *from* a right Religion, or to Debauch them *in* it, and thereby do promote the Interest of the Devils Kingdom, and Side with the Powers of Darkness against God. This is to arm the Creatures against the Creator to fight against God with his own Forces, to Use the World directly to the dishonour of him that made it, and is therefore in a very gross and heinous Manner to Abuse it. For Temporals are in order to Spirituals, and this present World ought to serve the Interests of the next, and as all Worldly Power and Grandeur is from God, so it ought to be used and laid out for God, and for the advancement of his Honour and Glory! And therefore all they who have any Considerable Share or Interest in the World, whether by way of Power, Honour, or Wealth, or whatever else may give them any Command or Influence over the Minds or Bodies of Men, ought to employ all these things for the advantage of God's Glory, for the Interests of his Kingdom, for the Promotion of his True Religion, and for the Edification of his Church, and if they do not they are Traitors to God, and Abuse both his *Kindness* and his *Gifts*. Which is done also,

Secondly, By those who Use the Good Things of the World, the Productions of Nature, the Fruits of the Earth, or any of God's Creatures in such a manner or degree as tends to their Prejudice. For the Creatures were intended for our Good, and therefore

ſore to uſe them for our hurt is to uſe them againſt their Natural Intention, which is to *Abuſe* them. Now we may uſe them to our hurt two ways, either to the Hurt of our Souls, or to the Hurt of our Bodies. To the hurt of our Souls, when either we immediately diſcompoſe our Rational Powers themſelves (as when by intemperate Eating or Drinking we diſorder our Minds, and diſturb our Underſtandings) or when we rob them of their proper and perfective Object, as when we gratify our ſelves in a leſſer Pleaſure, at the expence of a greater, and by an over-indulgence in the lower Goods of the Animal Life, unfit our ſelves for higher and more Rational Enjoyments. To the hurt of our Bodies, when we uſe any of God's Creatures in ſuch a degree as to untune the Natural Harmony of their Conſtitution, and ſo prejudice our Health. Which will always be accompanied with a diſorder of the Soul too, whoſe Operations depend too much upon the State of the Body not to ſuffer with it. This is groſly to abuſe the World, and our ſelves too, becauſe 'tis to pervert the good Creatures of God to an undue, nay to a contrary End, and in this conſiſts the Formality of that Vice which we call *Intemperance.*

To give an Inſtance of this: *Wine* is a noble Production of Nature, and an excellent Gift of God, intended (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks) to make glad the Heart of Man, to chear his ſinking Spirits when oppreſſed with either Sickneſs, Melancholly, or Worldly Trouble, and to excite him when thus revived to praiſe the Bountiful Author of ſo rich a Bleſſing. And ſo far 'tis well, and as it ſhould be. But when Men ſhall drink and ſwill till their Stomachs are heavy, and their Heads light, till they forget *themſelves* as well as their *Troubles*, and exchange their *Melancholly* for *Madneſs*; when they ſhall make themſelves ſick with that which ſhould comfort them, drown themſelves

in that which ſhould refreſh them, kill themſelves with that which ſhould revive them, and fall down under the Table with that which ſhould raiſe them up: This is a moſt ſhameful, and a moſt ungrateful return to God for his Bleſſings, and ſuch an intollerable Abuſe of his Creatures, as deſerves to be deprived even of the *uſe* of them.

Nor is the Practice of thoſe to be excuſed, who, though they do not go to this Exceſs, do yet make a common Trade of drinking Wine, and that very liberally too, when they have no need of it. To ſee a Healthy, Sanguine, Vigorous Man who fares plentifully every Day, and with a keen Stomach ſits at a full Table, whoſe Nature is already but too Luxuriant, and needs rather to be corrected and ſubdued than to be further cheriſhed and heightned, to be *diſciplined* rather than *feaſted*; I ſay, to ſee ſuch a one after his Days Indulgence go ordinarily to the Tavern at Night, and there ſpend as much upon his already over-pamper'd Carcaſe as would ſerve to maintain a poor Family for a Week, is certainly a thing very odious and abominable, far remote from the Sobriety of a Man, or the Moderation of a Chriſtian, and that tho' he be able to ſee his way Home, and can carry both himſelf and his *Burthen* ſafe to his Bed. For what tho' there be no down-right Drunkenneſs in the Caſe? Is there not however a great deal of Luxury and Self-Indulgence, and a ſhameful waſte and deſtruction of God's Creatures? And is it fit that one Man ſhould indulge himſelf ſo far in Extraordinaries, when thouſands are ready to faint and languiſh for want of Neceſſaries? *Give ſtrong drink* (ſays *Solomon*, *Prov.* 31. 6.) *unto him that is ready to periſh, and Wine to thoſe that be of heavy Hearts.* There indeed it would be well beſtow'd, and a ſeaſonable Relief, as it might be alſo ſometimes to a Man that has either ſtudied or labour'd hard all the Day. But for one that is Idle and Full, and whoſe Natural Fire is almoſt

almoſt overlaid with Fuel, and needs rather *Air* and *Emptineſs* than more Recruit, for ſuch a one I ſay to be always quickning his Pulſe and driving round his Blood with Hot, Spiritous Liquors, can I think by no means be reconciled to Chriſtian Temperance; and for ought I know, a Man were better of the two be ſometimes actually Drunk, and do the Natural Penance for it, than carry on ſuch a Conſtant Trade of High Drinking, than be ſuch a Grave, Sober and Deliberate Sot.

Again Thirdly, thoſe may be juſtly reckon'd to Abuſe the World who employ it only to their own Uſe, and do no good with it. This is what thoſe who have moſt of the World are Commonly moſt guilty of, and have moſt to anſwer for. Inſtead of inlarging their Hearts and their Hands with their Fortunes, the more they have of the World, the more the World has of them, and the more Covetous and greedy they are. Upon which is founded that Admonition of the Pſalmiſt, which at firſt View looks ſo like a Paradox, *when Riches increaſe, ſet not your Hearts upon them, Pſal.* 62. implying that then is the great danger of it, and the time when Men uſually do it, the true *Critical Seaſon* of Covetouſneſs. And to this agrees Experience. Thoſe who when they had little of the World were Free and Generous, Kind-hearted and Open-handed, how Cloſe and Stingy do they grow as the World thrives upon them, and they gather and ſwell in Subſtance! Eſpecially if they grow *Old* at the ſame time. Then the World has a double hold of them, and they are by a Second Ingagement devoted to it. Then 'tis that they begin truly to underſtand the worth of Money, and the Art of keeping it. Then 'tis they retrench their Expences, and withdraw their wonted Benevolences, live more within themſelves and are leſs Communicative to others, and like the *Setting* Sun, as it grows *Larger* and Nearer its

End

End, give leſs and leſs Light and Warmth to the World.

And they have (as it were by Conſent) got a Notion among them which very much Humours this Selfiſh and Illiberal Practice. They reckon what they Legally Poſſeſs ſo much their own, and that they are ſuch Abſolute Maſters of it that they may diſpoſe of it as they pleaſe. And if they ſhall think fit to do it wholly upon their own dear Selves, and let no body elſe be the better for it, what's that to any one, they make uſe of nothing but what is their *Own*, and is it not lawful to do what they pleaſe with *that*? But theſe Men for all their haſte are Miſtaken in their Accounts. For there is Nothing in this World ſo much our own as that we ſhould have an Abſolute and Unlimitted Dominion over it. He that made the World has alone ſuch a degree of Propriety in it. As for them, however they may be reckon'd *Proprietors* in reſpect of other Men, who cannot without Injuſtice invade their Rights, yet they are but *Stewards* and *Diſpenſators* in reſpect of God, who has only committed to them the good things of the World as a Truſt, and will hereafter require of them an Account how they have managed it. So that a great Eſtate is only a great Truſt, a Charge, a Talent, to be laid out for our Maſter's Uſe, that is, for the Intereſt and Advantage of our Brethren. And therefore they that do not make that uſe of it, but beſtow it wholly upon themſelves in a way of private Indulgence, are Falſe to their Truſt (how *true* ſoever they may be in their *Dealings*) and unfaithful to their Maſter, and Abuſe as much of the World as they thus mis-imploy. And what though Human Courts of Juſtice take no Cogniſance of it, ſince the laſt General Tribunal moſt certainly will, where the great Queſtion will be concerning the good they have done with the good things they have been intruſted with, and where

tho'

tho' they have Committed no Injustices, nor robb'd upon the Highway, yet this alone will be enough to Cast and Condemn them, *I was an hungry, and ye gave me no Meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink*, &c. *Mat.* 25. 42.

But if to employ the World to our own private Use only, be to abuse it, what shall we say of those Miserable Wretches who neither spend it upon themselves nor upon others, but hoard it up in Bags and Chests, till their Riches are Corrupted and their Garments Moth-eaten, and their Gold and Silver Canker'd and devour'd with the Rust. Why certainly these Men would ingross the Beams of the Sun, Seal up the Fountain of Light, and inclose the Common Air if they could. For they do so by as much of the World as they can. But sure there cannot be a grosser Abuse of the World than this, thus to frustrate the Bounty of Nature to stop the Circulation of her Blessings, and render her richest Fruits Idle and Insignificant. And if those that spend their Wealth in Riot and Luxury may be said with the *unjust Steward* to waste their Master's Goods, then those that thus safely hoard it up may be properly, even literally said with the *unprofitable Servant*, to bury their Talent in the Earth, and to hide their Lord's Money. And may justly with him expect to be *Cast into outer Darkness*, *Mat.* 25. 30.

These are they that abuse the World, and subject it to Vanity; that enjoy it as if it were their God, and that use and dispose of it as if they themselves were the Gods and Lords of it. And 'tis under these, and such like, that the Creation groans and travels in pain, and from the Bondage of whose Corruption it longs to be delivered, and from serving as an Instrument of their Disorders to be translated into the glorious liberty of the Children of God, even that state of Happiness and Perfection, that re-establishment of Order,

Order, that great Renovation of Nature, that *Regeneration* of the Univerſe under the New Heavens and the New Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs, when the Creature ſhall be no more abuſed, nor the Creator any more diſhonour'd, *Matth.* 19. 28. And thus you ſee what it is to abuſe the World, and who they are that do it. And from hence we may gather what it is to make a right uſe of the World, and who they are who ſo uſe the World as not to abuſe it. They are they who do not reſt, terminate and centre in the World, or make it their *End*, the boundary of their Deſires, and the ſtay of their Minds; no, nor yet love or adhere to it as the true and real Good of their Souls, but uſe it only as a *Mean* in order to that which is ſo, not affecting or deſiring it for it ſelf, as a *Beatific* Object, or a thing that has any real power over them, or that can beſtow any degree of Happineſs upon them, but only uſing and ſerving themſelves of it for their conveniency and accommodation; in one word, that don't *enjoy* but only *uſe* the World. And that uſe it alſo to right and good Ends, ſuch as the Glory of God, the Intereſt of Religion, their own good (that of their Bodies, and that of their Souls) and the good of their Brethren. That paſſing through the World like *haſty Travellers* are moderate and temperate in the uſe of the Creatures, neither diſturbing their Bodies by them, nor injuring their Minds, either by diſordering their Intellectual Faculties, or by unfitting them for higher, while they gratifie them with lower Enjoyments. That neither hoard up the good things of the World, nor yet imploy them wholly to their own private uſe, but communicate and do good with them, according to the meaſure that they have of them, and ſo purchaſe *Heaven* by parting with a little *Earth*. This is to make a right uſe of the World, to uſe it according to its worth, and according to its true Natural Intention;

tention; and the contrary to this is to abuſe it. I come now briefly to ſhew,

2. *Upon what account it concerns us to beware of this Abuſe.* And among many others there are two very ſenſible and perſwaſive Reaſons for this; the firſt of which may be taken from the *Shortneſs* and Tranſitorineſs, the ſecond from the *Inconſtancy* and Inſtability of all Worldly Things. And they are both of them intimated by the Apoſtle in the place now under our Conſideration. The Firſt, when he ſays, *The time is ſhort*: The Second, when he ſays, *The Faſhion of this World paſſes away.*

And 1. *The Time is ſhort.* Both that of the World, and that of thoſe that dwell in it. The World as fixed and as *well-built* as it ſeems for *Age*, and which the Heathen Philoſophy thought *Eternal*, muſt and ſhall come to an End, and that End, in all likelyhood, is not very far off. The Time it ſeems was ſhort in the Apoſtle's Days, which accordingly in Scripture are often call'd the *laſt*; but it is much ſhorter now ſince ſo many Revolutions of the Sun are gone over our Heads, who by this certainly cannot want much of having finiſh'd his Rounds. And yet if the World were to laſt ſo much longer, what would it all be to Eternity? But if Time it ſelf be ſo ſhort, what then is the Time of Man? If the whole Circumference be ſo narrow, what then is that little *Arch* of the *Circle* which makes up the meaſure of our Vanity? What is it, I will not ſay to Eternity, but even to the World's Duration? And if Time it ſelf be but as a ſwift *River* that quickly paſſes, ſure we Mortals are but as the *Bubbles* in it, that haſtily riſe up and ſink down one after another in our turns.

'Tis indeed but a little while ſince we came into the World, and in all likelihood much leſs that moſt of us have to continue in it; and when a few more Suns have riſen and gone down upon us we muſt all

Die,

Die, and no longer enjoy the Light of the Heavens, nor the Fruits of the Earth, but take up our cold Lodging in one of its dark little Cells, and leave the reſt of it, for as little a while, to other Tenants. In the mean time we muſt go and give an Account of our Stewardſhip, and be favourably or ſeverely dealt with in the other World according as we have uſed this. But now if our ſtay in this World be ſo ſhort, and our reckoning ſo near, does not this preach to us a Lecture of Moderation in the uſe of the Creatures, and very loudly Caution us againſt the Abuſe of them? For is it Wiſdom to cleave to thoſe things ſo immoderately which we muſt part with ſo quickly, to ſet our Hearts upon a World where we are only to take a turn or two, to lay out ſo many Hours upon our Pleaſures and Diverſions when we have but ſo few for our work, to ſpend our Morning in Luxury when our whole Day is ſo ſhort, to Miſuſe any part of our Time when we have but ſo little in all, or to abuſe the Creatures in any way of Intemperance, when we muſt ſo ſhortly anſwer for the Abuſe of them? And after all is it worth while to run the Hazard of being Miſerable Everlaſtingly for ſuch ſhort Tranſient Indulgences, which Moulder away under our Hands, and even Periſh in the very *Uſing*? Were we here at our home, or in a place of long Abode and Settlement, there might be ſome invitation to Luxury and Indulgence, to plant Vineyards and be drunk with the Wine of them, but will we be intemperate upon the way, while we are in our Journey, and when we *ride Poſt*? Or rather ſhould we not take this for our Motto, *Let your Moderation be known unto all Men; the Lord is at hand?* Yes certainly, the Nearneſs of the Other World ought to awe us into Sobriety, and keep us within the Bounds of it, for that little while we live in this. But this is not all, for,

Secondly,

Secondly, *The Fashion of this World passes away.* 'Tis not only to last for a short time, but even while it does last 'tis liable to many uncertainties, and suffers many Changes. The Scenes of this great Theatre are always shifting and turning, and the Stage is Never long without a New Figure. There are great Diversities of them, and the time for Action short, and therefore the Succession must be quick, that so they may all take their turns. The present Scene therefore never holds very long, but passes away, and another Figure appears, so that there is nothing fix'd and steddy. New Revolutions in Empires and Kingdoms, new Alterations in Families, new Accidents to particular Persons, no State or Condition of Life secure from Changes and Chances. He that appears in the Form and Habit of a King to Day, may put on that of a Beggar to Morrow. For 'tis all but *Acting of a Part*, and the whole World is but one great Moveable Scene. Besides that we may now justly expect towards the latter End of this Great *Opera*, that the Scenes will thicken every Day more and more, and that the Fashion of this World will pass yet more swiftly away.

But now is this a World to be Fond of, or to Riot and Revel in? Is it not a Venture to Enjoy where there is so much Hazard of Losing, or to lean with great Force where the ground is so slippery, since the Fall must be in proportion to the Weight? Ought we not rather to tread lightly, and walk in Suspence, and be sure to keep our *Heads* in good Order, if 'twere only that they might look to our *Feet?* For we walk upon Ice, and our Vessel Floats upon a Wave. Dare we then make an ill Use of the Good Things of the World, when 'tis so uncertain how long we shall have even the very use of them? Dare we abuse our Power to Insolence, or our Greatness to Oppression, or our Wealth to Luxury, or our Health to Intemperance,

rance, or our Wit and Parts to Profaneneſs, of our Time to unfruitful and unprofitable Studies (for that's one great Abuſe of our Time as well as Idleneſs) when 'tis ſo very uncertain when we ſhall be deprived of any, or all of theſe things? For they are all but *Scenes*, and thoſe continually *paſſing*. It concerns us therefore to live rather in a conſtant Awe among ſo many Changes and Chances, and to uſe great Reſerve and Moderation in our Commerce with the Creatures, ſtill fearing the next *Scene*, leſt it ſhould be that of a Puniſhment for our Abuſe of the Former.

Let therefore the Conſideration of the Shortneſs and Inſtability of this preſent World ſo Govern us in the Uſe of all its little Vaniſhing Goods, that we may neither abuſe them, nor our ſelves by them, but be ſo Moderate even in the moſt allow'd Enjoyments of the Creatures that they may neither prove a Snare to us here, nor riſe up in Judgment againſt us Hereafter. And I pray God (as our Church does) that we may all *ſo paſs through things Temporal, that we finally loſe not the things Eternal.* Amen.

Now to God the Father, &c.

A Diſ-

A Discourse Concerning the Successive Vanity of Human Life.

ECCL. xj. 8.

——*All that Cometh is Vanity.*

THis is one of those *Melancholly*, but *Wholsome* Considerations wherewith the Wise Preacher qualifies and allays the Joy and Festivity of a Long and Prosperous Life; the Pride and Luxurancy of which he Tempers with a double Reflection; One taken from the Consideration of *Death*, and the other from the Successive *Vanity* of Human *Life*. *But if a Man live many years* (says he) *and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the Days of Darkness, for they shall be many.* As much as to say, 'tis not very likely that a Man should live many Years, considering the Niceness and Delicacy of his Bodily Frame, the Variety of Diseases and other Accidents he is Subject to, and the very small Number of those that attain to any considerable Age in Comparison of those Multitudes who drop away before they come to any Ripeness, like untimely Fruit, whom either some inward Decay, or the Force of Violent Winds loosens or Snatches from the Tree. But suppose a Man by the strength of his Seminal Principles and a right Conjunction of other Accidents should live many Years, yet 'tis not at all likely he should *Rejoyce* in them all. 'Tis not indeed likely that a very Long Life should be also a very Happy one, at least that it should be Happy

throughout, in every Stage and Period of it. We uſually ſay indeed a Short Life and a Merry, and Fair Weather may laſt for a little Seaſon, but 'tis not probable that ſo long a Day ſhould be without a Cloud to over-caſt its Light, or a Storm to ruffle its Stillneſs, but ſhould Shine on Clear and Calm to the very laſt. For beſides that Human Life is liable to variety of Caſualties, and there are innumerable ways whereby a Man may be Croſs'd even when he ſeems moſt ſecure of what he fancies would make him Happy, the Scenes of the World Change ſo faſt, and the Foul Days in his Calendar have ſuch quick returns, that in all probability a Man cannot live very long without meeting with ſome of them. 'Tis much if in a great while he does not Feel or See ſome ſad Event or other, 'tis much if he does not Suffer either in his own Perſon, or elſe in his Friends and Relations, unleſs he live ſo tediouſly long as to have none, but to be Friendleſs and Deſolate in a wide and ill-natured World, and by that time I think his *Days* of *Rejoycing* will be pretty well over, and that he may be weary of the World, if the World be not of him.

By this it ſeems highly improbable that a Man ſhould live many Years and Rejoyce in them all. But ſuppoſe he ſhould, ſuppoſe the Current of his long Life ſhould run Clear and Fine to the laſt, and that by a rare and indulgent Providence he ſhould paſs over his ſlow Stage ſmoothly and pleaſantly, without meeting with the leaſt rub in his way, any thing that may interrupt the Courſe of his Proſperity, or diminiſh his Senſe of it. Suppoſe in a Word that God ſhould empty his *Left* hand upon him, bleſs him with all Worldly Happineſs, and with Days too wherein to enjoy the Iweet of it, yet let him remember the *Days* of *Darkneſs*. Let him remember that all this Happineſs, as Great and as long-lived as it is, muſt come to an End, that this Fair Sun muſt Set, and this long Day be follow'd with

with a much longer Night, that Death ſhall put an End to all, and that then his Confinement to Darkneſs ſhall out-laſt his Enjoyment of the Light, and he ſhall lye longer under the Ground, than he has lived and walkt upon it. Let him remember the Days of Darkneſs, for they ſhall be many.

But then for fear he ſhould *Forget* them, becauſe he looks upon them as a great way off, the Wiſe Man preſents him in the mean while with ſomething of a nearer Conſideration, and more preſent Concernment, and that is, that conſtant *Succeſſion* of *Vanity* which is in Human Life, that all that is to come of it ſhall be no more to his Satisfaction than what he has ſeen and enjoy'd of it already, and that his Future Expectations ſhall prove every whit as vain and uncontenting as his paſt Fruitions, and that therefore as a long Life is not Ordinarily to be hoped for, ſo even by thoſe that have it 'tis not much to be valued or reckon'd upon, but that ſomething more Laſting and Satisfying is to be ſought after: For, *All that Cometh is Vanity.*

There are ſome Truths which Men want to have *prov'd* and Explain'd to them in a *Rational* way, becauſe they are wholly Ignorant of them, or at leaſt do not clearly and fully underſtand them. And there are others again which they do underſtand well enough whenever they are pleas'd to Conſider and Reflect upon them, but the Fault and the Unhappineſs is, that they ſeldom or never do ſo, and accordingly live and order themſelves as if they were ignorant of them. Now theſe Truths need not ſo much to be *Demonſtrated* as *Illuſtrated*, and ſet in a Fair and Advantageous Light, where they may meet and ſtrike the Drowſie and Unattentive Eye, which needs no other aſſiſtance towards the Sight of ſuch Objects, than only to be directed to them. Of this latter Order of Truths I take that of the Text under Conſideration to be, and accordingly I intend,

First, To give it ſome Illuſtration; and then,
Secondly, To make ſome Practical Improvement of it to the moſt Material Uſes of Life.

All that Cometh is Vanity, ſays the inſpired Preacher, wherein he directly meets with that groſs Cheat and Illuſion which Men ſuffer to paſs upon themſelves, and which a great many never diſcover all their Lives long. They will readily own that all that is *paſt* is Vanity, if 'twere only becauſe it is *paſt*. They have found it ſo, and are convinc'd of it by a Thouſand Experiments, even by as many as they have made. They have found that the World, like the Prince of it, the Devil, has been a Lyar from the beginning, has always deceiv'd them, and that they never enjoy'd, but were diſappointed. And accordingly, there is not a Man of them that would live over his paſt Years again. And as free will they be to allow you that the *preſent* is alſo Vanity. They actually feel it ſo, are uneaſie under it, and for that reaſon wiſh the *preſent* were *paſt*. And becauſe it does not paſs faſt enough, they contrive Arts and Devices to *paſs* it away. They not only find that whoſoever drinks of theſe Waters ſhall thirſt again, (as our Saviour's Expreſſion is) but they feel themſelves dry, even while they are drinking; nay, that their very drinking increaſes their Thirſt. They feel an emptineſs and an hollowneſs after they have feaſted upon the World, and find they have ſuck'd nothing but Wind from the *Breaſts of her Conſolation*. They abound, they overflow, nay, they ſurfeit with exceſs, and yet they are not pleaſed, there is ſomething wanting; they *poſſeſs* enough, but they *enjoy* little, and their Souls are empty while their Arms are full. So fatal and unavoidable is the unhappineſs of Man, whether he has the things of this World, or has them not. If he has them not, then he pines and languiſhes for want of them, and frets with Envy againſt thoſe that have them.

them. And if he has them, yet the matter is not mended, for then he is troubled at their Vanity, and ſighs to ſee himſelf ſo baulkt and diſappointed in them.

They will therefore eaſily be brought to confeſs that the *paſt* and *preſent* are all over Vanity. All the Queſtion is concerning what is to *come*. And though, ſince the paſt and preſent were once future, they have all the reaſon in the World to ſuſpect the ſame of that part of Life which remains; *viz.* That when it comes to be preſent it will be as vain as thoſe other Futures were when Preſent or Paſt, yet (ſo ſtrange and unaccountable is their ſtupidity) 'tis moſt certain that they do not. No, on the contrary, though they need but conſule their Memory for the Vanity of their paſt Life, and their preſent Senſe for the Vanity of what they now enjoy, though their Life has been all along till now, and is now nothing but Diſappointment, yet (ſuch is the Magick that has inchanted them) they cannot forbear fancying that they ſhall find greater Contentment in that which is *behind*, that their Happy Days are yet to come, that they ſhall one time or other be better pleaſed and ſatisfied with their Condition, and that that Happineſs which has hitherto been too ſlippery for their hold, and like a Shadow or a Vapour has ſlipt through their graſping Arms, ſhall one Day be confin'd within the Circle of their Embraces. Hence they paſs on to *Fictions* and *Suppoſitions*, projecting Models of Happineſs to themſelves, and imagining how well 'twould be with them, and how finely they ſhould enjoy themſelves, if they were but in ſuch and ſuch Circumſtances. Thus they Fancy, or rather thus they *Dream*, and in the ſtrength of this weak Imagination, they begin every Day with a freſh expectation, enter upon new Charges and Labours, as the credulous *Chymiſt* does in the flattering Search of his *Elixir*, and put forward with a

trembling Paſſion in the Chaſe of Happineſs, which ſome of them purſue ſo eagerly, and are for overtaking ſo very ſoon, that they quicken their pace, and are for *living faſt* as they call it, though they overtake nothing by it in the Event but an early Grave, and in a very literal ſenſe run themſelves *out* of *Breath*.

This is the Sentiment and the Conduct of Men, thus they think, and thus they act, or rather thus they Dream, and thus they walk in their ſleep. But if they will hear a Man of more Wiſdom and Experience than themſelves, he will tell them that *all that cometh is Vanity*. 'Tis ſo, and they will find it ſo, one part of Life after another, as faſt as it cometh. For indeed as long as it is *coming*, or to *come*, its Vanity does not appear; on the contrary there is nothing thought of then but Content and Satisfaction, nothing but *Elyſian* Proſpects, Dreams of Happineſs, and Landskips of Paradiſe. For there is a ſtrange Fallacy in *hereafter*, and Diſtance which leſſens Objects to the Eye, magnifies them to the Mind. We are big with the Hopes of that part of Life which is coming on, and live Day after Day upon the Fancy of what to morrow will produce, like the Spectators of a Play ſtill in expectation of the next Scene, but yet when to morrow comes we find it juſt like yeſterday, Vain and without Content, and ſo will every to *morrow* be when it comes to be to *day*.

But yet this inchanted Sleep hangs ſtill in our Eyes, and we will dream on, and when we have ſet the Day for ſuch an Enjoyment, we long with as much Impatience for the happy Seaſon as the *Adulterous Eye* does for the ſlow Twilight, complain of the heavy progreſs of Time, and are contriving how to paſs the dull *Interim* away that delays our Pleaſure, and enviouſly ſtands between us and our promiſed Entertainment. But yet when the long-look'd for Happineſs arrives we find it quite another thing in the Enjoyment than

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it was in the *Idea*, that it will not bear the weight we lay upon it, that it neither anſwers our Expectations, nor ſatisfies our Deſires. We find in ſhort that there is nothing in it, and ſo we are ſerv'd from day to day, and ſo ſhall be as long as we live, even *all the Days of our Vanity.*

'Tis in the courſe of Life as when a Man walks or rides in a *Fog*. In the very place where he moves the thin ſubtle Vapour ſeems as nothing, and is hardly viſible, but at ſome diſtance from him it appears of ſo thick and maſſy a conſiſtence that he fancies it would ſenſibly reſiſt his Touch, and that he could embrace it in his Arms. But yet when he arrives to the deſign'd place, he finds himſelf in the thin again, and the *Phantaſtick Solid* is remov'd from him to a further diſtance. Juſt ſo the Happineſs of this Life is always to come, ſtill at ſome remove from us, never *actual* and *preſent*. For whenever it is ſo it vaniſhes into a thin nothing, and is loſt as ſoon as found. We think we *ſhall* be happy, but we never think we *are* ſo; and moſt certain it is we ſhall never be here of that Opinion; for *all that cometh is Vanity*. So that in this ſenſe alſo as well as in that intended by St. *James*, what is our Life but a *Vapour? Jam.* 4. 14.

Men commonly think of no other Diſappointment but only the not having what they deſire, and this in their Language is called not to *ſucceed*; but if they do indeed thus ſucceed and accompliſh their Wiſh they will find another, and if I miſtake not, a worſe Diſappointment, the not *enjoying* what they have, the Diſappointment of *Fruition*. I call it a worſe Diſappointment, for this as well as ſome other Reaſons that might be aſſigned, becauſe 'tis ſo neceſſary, perpetual and unavoidable. The firſt ſort of Diſappointment may be often prevented by wiſe Management. 'Tis not neceſſary a Man ſhould always loſe his longing, and miſs of what he deſires. No, he may ſometimes

compaſs his Point, and obtain the thing that he wills. But no Management or Addreſs, no Skill or Contrivance can prevent the ſecond, no, nor any *Succeſs* neither; for 'tis with the Succeſs that this Diſappointment begins. For no ſooner is any thing enjoyed, no ſooner does any of our Reverſions of Happineſs fall, but 'tis weigh'd in the Ballance and found wanting; *All that cometh is Vanity.*

Thus it has been from the beginning, and thus it will be to the end of Life, every part of which is a Cheat, a Deluſion, a Lie, and every Man that lives walks in a *vain Shadow*, in the Fog we were but now ſpeaking of, till his walk is at an end, and the weary Traveller repoſes himſelf in the Grave. He that is *young* thinks it a wonderful Happineſs to live a great while, but when he has obtain'd his Wiſh, does he find that Satisfaction in it? And ſo he that is *Poor* and *Low* in the World fancies it a kind of Heaven to be Rich and Great; but when he is ſo does he find it ſuch a Happy State as he before imagin'd? Could I then lengthen out my Span to an *Antediluvian* ſtretch, what ſhould I be the better, or what great matter ſhould I find in it! 'Twould be a mere nothing, not only when paſt, but even while preſent. Beſides more *Sins* and more *Diſappointments*, I ſhould only repeat the ſame things over a little oftner, and make more frequent *Turnings* in the ſame *Circle*. And ſo for Wealth or Preferment, could I be Rich or Great I ſhould not find that Light and Luſtre in it which now at a diſtance flaſhes and ſparkles in my Eye, but ſhould quickly grow ſick of that State my ſelf, which perhaps another would ſtill envy in me.

But what if I ſhould become *Wiſe* and *Knowing*? Why then I ſhould be leſs pleas'd than ever, both with my ſelf and with the World about me. I ſhould then be leſs able to bear the Follies and Impertinencies of Converſation, which would ſtrike more diſagreeably

ably upon my more delicate Senſe, as harſh Sounds do upon a Nice and well-tuned Ear; that which pleaſes me now would not reliſh with me then, nay I know not what would, for I ſhould ſo ſee through the Vanity of every thing, as to take pleaſure in Nothing. For when all's done, the Pleaſure of this Life is Founded upon *Ignorance*, and the Wiſe Man can find no Paradiſe here, though the Fool can. 'Tis in this reſpect alſo as well as in regard of its Tranſientneſs, like the Pleaſure of a *Dream*, becauſe owing to *Sleep*. And it laſts as long as thoſe Phantaſtick Pleaſures uſe to do; that is, till a Man is *awake*, till he recovers the uſe of his Senſes, till his Eyes are open, till he comes to himſelf, (as 'tis ſaid of the young Prodigal, *Luk.* 15.) till he begins to think, reflect and conſider, and then it vaniſhes like a Dream when one is *awake*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 73. So that a Mans Wiſdom would but awake him from a Golden Dream, rob him of a kind and obliging Errour, diſcover to him his Poverty as well as his Ignorance, and make him ſee the Falſeneſs of that Coyn by its Light, which paſs'd well enough with him in the Dark. So true would he find that of the Wiſe as well as Great King, *In much Wiſdom is much Grief, and he that increaſes Knowledge increaſes Sorrow.* Our Suppoſition was here made good, *Solomon* had Wiſdom as well as Wealth and Honour, and he found that as vain as the other two, his Wiſdom that diſcover'd the Vanity of other things, at length diſcover'd that of it ſelf, even the *Light* it ſelf proved to be but a *Shadow*, and ſo 'tis in every thing elſe: For, *All that cometh is Vanity.*

And there is clear and evident Reaſon for all this. For God having made us for the Enjoyment of Himſelf, has accordingly proportioned our Capacities to the Immenſe Good of his own Nature; and though he has limited every other Senſe and Faculty about us, yet he has ſet no Bounds to our *Deſires*, but has given

a kind of *Infinity* to our *Wills*, wherein by the way consists the principal part of the Divine Image and Resemblance in us. And therefore 'tis absolutely impossible we should be satisfied with any thing here, let us enjoy what we will, because we shall still desire beyond what we enjoy. 'Tis true indeed upon the same Grounds a Man may be here very *miserable*, because that strong spring whereby he stands bent for Happiness will make him the more sensible of those Pains and Griefs which are contrary to it; but 'tis impossible that any thing in this World should make him very *happy*.

But what then is Life worth at this Rate? Why truly not much, unless it be in order to a better State hereafter, and as 'tis an Opportunity for it. Nor do I know any great reason a Man has to desire to live *longer*, unless it be that he may live *better*. But then does not this reflect upon the Goodness of God, that he would place so noble a Creature in such poor Circumstances, in a *barren and dry Land, where no water is* to quench that Fiery Thirst which he has put in his Nature? No, as Man cannot be very happy here, so neither is it fit he should. For however it might have been with *Adam* if he had continued Innocent, who perhaps might have had such free and large Communications from God as would have made a true Paradise of a Garden, and turn'd his Terrestrial State into a kind of Heaven; yet 'tis to be consider'd that we are now Sinners, and as such excluded from having any *Paradise* upon Earth by the same Sentence that cast *Adam* out of his. We are now in a State of *Penance*, as well as in a State of *Tryal* and *Probation*, and therefore must not anticipate our Reward here, but be exercised with Vanity and Dissatisfaction, which is that *sore Travel* that God has laid upon the Sons of *Adam*, who though Heirs of Glory, and born to Crowns and Scepters in the other World, must yet inherit only

Dreams,

Dreams, Shadows, and Vanity in this, wherein *all that cometh is Vanity.* There is no Content to be found in any of the Enjoyments of this World, let a Man's ſhare of it, or ſtate in it be what it will, 'tis all but a Union of Cyphers, a Collection of Nothing, not worth a Thought, or a Wiſh, or a Tear; only in Religion and the Conſcientious diſcharge of one's Duty, and the practice of a good Life, (the only place where Men ſeek not for it) there is ſome real Content and true Satisfaction to be had, and the more we improve in Goodneſs the more Happy and Comfortable will our Lives be. According to the Obſervation of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 119. *I ſee that all things come to an end, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.* Wherein he is not contradicted, but ſeconded by his Son *Solomon*, who tho' he inſcribed Vanity upon all things elſe, even upon *Wiſdom* and *Knowledge*, yet (which is not a little obſervable) found none in *Religion* and the *Fear* of God; but on the contrary, recommends theſe as the final reſult of all his Reflections upon the Vanity of things, and as the *whole* of Man, *Eccl.* 11. 13.

And yet after all, 'tis not all the Reaſoning in the World that will effectually convince Men of its Vanity, till the *Holy Spirit* of God ſhall work this Conviction in their Hearts by an inward *Sentiment* exceeding the force of all *Rational Light.* Convinc'd indeed they may be after a ſort, they ſee it by Reaſon, and find it by Experience. But they are not ſo convinc'd as to give over expecting and projecting, building Caſtles in the Air, and making up Fools Paradiſes to themſelves; not ſo convinc'd of the Vanity of Life as to lay down their fond dependencies upon what is to come of it, but in the midſt of all their Reflections and Experiences follow on as keenly upon the World, as if they were ignorant of its Vanity, and never had made Tryal of its Deceits. 'Tis plain

therefore

therefore that this is only a General and Notional Conviction of the World's Vanity, such as swims in the Brain, and floats in the Fancy, such as musing and thoughtful Men form to themselves in a study, but presently lose and forget again assoon as they come abroad into this bewitching World. But now the *Holy Spirit* gives another sort of Conviction of the Worlds Vanity, such as is deep, lively, actual and abiding, such as sinks down into the bottom of our Spirits, and from thence as an inner spring actuates and inforces all our outward Motions, such in one word as *Dying* Men have—. But I hasten to the Improvement that may be made of these Considerations to the use of Living. Briefly then,

1. If there be such a universal Vanity diffused through the whole compass of Human Life, so that what comes on will be as little to our Satisfaction as what is gone and past, then this lays a considerable ground to confirm us in the belief and expectation of a *Future State*, it being not worth while for God to bring such Noble Creatures into such a vain as well as transitory World, if it were not in order to somewhat further. If God had not intended us for any other State than this, to take a turn or two here, and then sink into our first nothing, he either would not have made us, or else he would have suited our Capacities to the narrow Measure of these Worldly Objects: And therefore since we find our selves so much above them as not possibly to be satisfied with them, may we not hence conclude that this Life is not our final or only State, but that there is another, and a better Life to come.

Again, 2. If this present World and Life be so all over Vanity, then we may hence learn the great Folly and Madness of *Sin*. 'Tis most certain that no Man sins purely for Sins sake. 'Tis the Consideration of some Pleasure or Advantage or other that induces him

him to it. *What will ye give me*, ſaid *Judas* to the Chief Prieſts, *and I will deliver him unto you.* And the ſame is the Language of every Sinner to thoſe three curſed Traders for Souls, the World, the Fleſh and the Devil, *What will ye give me?* Why, *All this will I give thee*, ſays the laſt of them, ſhewing him ſome of the vain Grandeurs or Pleaſures of this Tranſitory Life. He has the unhappy Advantage to come with ready Money in his hand (ſuch ſtuff as it is) for which the Needy and Covetous Sinner likes his Chap-Man, and accordingly deals with him. So that in all Sin there is at leaſt an implicit, if not an expreſs Contract, and every Sinner plainly makes a Bargain, ſelling his *Soul* as really and truly (though not always at the ſame Price) as *Judas* did the *Body* of our Saviour. But alas what a mad fooliſh Bargain is it? For what is it that he has in Exchange? Could the Devil make good his confident offer in the largeſt extent, when he ſays, *All this will I give thee*, yet what is that mighty *All*? What is there in this vain World, though a Man could be Maſter of the whole of it (according to our Saviour's Suppoſition) that ſhould induce him to do the leaſt Evil, to offend an Infinite God, and hazard a Happy, not to ſay Miſerable Eternity? *What Fruit*, ſays the Apoſtle, *had ye then in thoſe things*, *Rom.* 6. 21. What Fruit indeed, but the Fruits of *Sodom*, deceitful Viands, Aery Banquets, Phantaſtick Food, that is ſo far from ſatisfying the Hunger, that it will not ſo much as indure the Touch. And ſhall I ſell my Soul, my God, my Heaven for this? So that one may well put that Queſtion of the Pſalmiſt, *Are not they without underſtanding that work wickedneſs?* That do ſuch Work for ſuch Wages? They call themſelves indeed Rational Creatures, and ſome of them pretend more particularly to *Reaſon*, and ſet up for *Wits*, but have they ſo much as Common ſenſe or Underſtanding? Or rather may not every Sinner more

juſtly

juſtly ſay to the God he has offended in the words of an Humble Penitent, *So fooliſh was I and ignorant, and even as a Beaſt before thee.*

Again, 3. If all that cometh be Vanity as well as all that's paſt, then we have the leſs reaſon to fear Death, particularly that which we call an *untimely* one, and none at all to reckon upon the Pleaſures of a long Life. The leſs reaſon to fear Death, becauſe the World it takes us from is ſo very vain and little worth. And none to reckon upon the Pleaſures of a long Life, becauſe theſe Pleaſures are only in the Imagination, ſuch as thoſe who die early think they loſe, but thoſe who live longer do not find. For we do not advance in Happineſs as we do in Years, eſpecially if we grow wiſer with our Age, but tread the ſame Fairy-ring, and find nothing more in our Latter than in our Former Rounds, except only greater Toil and Wearineſs. Though therefore a Man ſhould live many Years, yet let him remember, not only the Days of *Darkneſs*, but the Days of *Light* too; For, *All that cometh is Vanity.*

Again, 4. and Laſtly, From the Conſideration of that conſtantly ſucceſſive Vanity, which as a Shadow always attends and keeps pace with this preſent Life, we may be further inſtructed to make the more careful Proviſion for another, to ſeek out for ſomething more laſting and ſatisfying, a *better* and a *more enduring Subſtance*, even that *Inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for us.* Conſidering what a ſad thing it would be firſt to walk all our Lives in a vain Shadow, and then to lie down in Sorrow, to have *Vanity* for our Portion here, and Eternal *Miſery* hereafter. The former we cannot avoid, but we may the Latter; and that we may all have the Wiſdom to do ſo, God of his Infinite Mercy grant through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be all Glory and Thankſgiving for ever. *Amen.*

An

An Admonition Concerning two late Books, call'd *Diſcourſes of the Love of God.*

IN the firſt place I acknowledge the Perſons that appear againſt me to be Men of Conſiderable Character and Eminence in their ſeveral ways, and therefore would not have any thing that I ſhall further ſay upon this Occaſion to be interpreted to the Diminution or Diſparagement of either of them, to whom I mean nothing but Good Will, Honour and Reſpect.

Not that the Firſt of my Adverſaries has given me any Example of this. On the Contrary (though I am not over-quick at reſenting) I cannot but be Senſible, and ſo muſt any Indifferent Reader, of the unkindneſs and diſreſpect he expreſſes towards me, and with what Diſdain and Contempt he treats me. 'Tis true indeed he has been ſo Civil (to me ſhall I ſay, or to himſelf) as not to foul his Pen with dirty and Scurrilous Language, the too faſhionable Rhetorick of the Times, but yet the ſpiteful Ayr that runs through his Book too plainly ſhews with what Spirit and Temper he writes, and may juſtly tempt even Candor it ſelf to ſuſpect, that he that could allow himſelf ſo free an Indulgence of his Spleen and Prejudice, forbore the other rather out of Regard to *himſelf* than any kindneſs to his *Adverſary*, leſt he ſhould thereby bring his Breeding into queſtion, and forfeit the very plauſible and agreeable Character of a *Civil* Writer. Which yet I think he has in great Meaſure done however: For ſure *good*

Nature

Nature is a very considerable Ingredient of *good Manners*, and a Man cannot very well be said to be *Civil* to any one to whom at the same time he plainly appears to be very *unkind*.

Why our ingenious Author *has* used me thus I partly Guess, though why he *should* I know no just reason, especially considering the different Treatment he had from me upon a like publick Occasion. Which I cannot mention without telling him by the way that as if I had made *no* reply to his late Treatise, I had not been in his Debt, so if I make him a *Civil* one he is *doubly* in mine.

But to let that pass, I know nothing more unbecoming either a Searcher after Truth, or an Advocate for it than Peevishness and ill-Nature, nor how this Author could be guilty of a greater Incongruity than while he was writing of the *Love* of *God* to let fall such broad indications of Disaffection towards his *Neighbour*, especially being unprovoked, I might say Obliged, and upon the very first Aggress.

When indeed the *Saw* of *Contention* has been drawn backward and forward for some while, no wonder if at length it wax hot, and great Allowances are to be made for Men that grow out of Temper after they have been chaff'd and warm'd with long Dispute, as also *Some* for him that is the Respondent, and upon the defensive part; But for one that is the first Aggressor to come on so fiercely, and at first dash to fall upon a Man like a red-hot piece of Iron upon an *Anvil*, burning and sparkling as it falls, this I think is against all the Measures of *Decorum*, and that common Civility that is due from Man to Man, not or say from one Christian to another. And he will hardly perswade the World to believe (were it more Candidly disposed than it is) that he had either Truth or Charity in his *View* that shall allow himself such a free Range in Malicious Railery, and whose Expressions

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are so high-season'd with Spite and ill-Nature. He may talk of *preventing Mistakes about Religion*, &c. but the jealous World will be apt to believe this only a good Covering for a bad Design, and that whatever shews of Zeal for truth or Religion may swim at top, there is an old Grudge at the Bottom.

I am not so wedded to an *Hypothesis* (whatever the Kindness of this Adversary may insinuate) but that I value *Truth* more, and if I know my own Heart, should gladly and thankfully receive the poorest Endeavours from the meanest hand, whose sincere Intention I have reason to believe is to reduce me to it. But when Men shall write upon a *Pique*, and instead of opposing their Adversaries Conclusions shall reflect spitefully upon their Persons, as the Case is then far otherwise, so 'tis no wonder if the Resentment be so too. I do not therefore thank our Author at all for the Pains he has taken in his Book, which I cannot think written out of love to *Me* at least, if out of any to *Truth* (for if his Business had been only to convince me, and set my Understandings at rights, what need so much Personal Reflection and Spiteful Insinuation) but rather to give vent to an *Angry* and uneasie *Humour* of his own, and to entertain his Reader at the Expence of my Reputation. If therefore I *Forgive* him 'tis sufficient, which I assure him I heartily do, Praying for him among those that *despitefully use me*, and wishing him a better Spirit, and that he would endeavour to reform his Temper, which I'm afraid is more *unserviceable* to Religion than any *Hypothesis* of mine can be. And for his better Assistance herein I would humbly Commend to his Reading and serious Consideration part of one of the New Moral Essays of M. *Placette*, (they are *Protestant* Essays, and therefore he need not be afraid of any *Mystic* Divinity in them) Vol. 2. *Pag.* 284. concerning the Evil of abusing Men in Print.

My Second Adversary treats me with a little more

Civility and Reſpect, for which I thank him. And yet there are here and there ſome Roughneſſes, little Flirts, and not very good-Natured Reflections and Inſinuations that need ſome allowance, though not more than (I thank God) I can give. Only there is one Paſſage which I take very unkindly of him, and for which I think he owes me ſome Account, I may ſay Reparation. He ſays, *Page* 62. that I Charge the Authors of the Vulgar Expoſition with *Inſincerity* and *love to their Luſts.* And that I do this *Plainly* and *Confidently.* And upon this he proceeds to Sound an Alarm, and to ſtir up all the Clergy of the Nation to engage and riſe up in Arms againſt me, by ſaying, That *in defence of their own Reputations, and the Reputation of their traduc'd Brethren, all the whole Body of the Clergy who differ,* &c. *ſtand bound to vindicate themſelves from thoſe vile Imputations which I caſt upon them.*

Now he cannot but be ſenſible that there may be an odious and invidious manner of expreſſing even a *Truth.* Which may be repreſented either nakedly as it is, or with ſome tenderneſs and mollification, or elſe odiouſly and by way of aggravation. To the firſt of theſe Juſtice would perſwade, to the ſecond Kindneſs and good-Nature, but the third is altogether unfair, and unbecoming a Man that pretends to either of the other. And yet is not this the thing he does by me? Does he not aggravate my Senſe, and give it an harſher Ayr by his way of expreſſing it? He ſays in down-right terms, that I charge theſe Men with *Inſincerity*, and *Love* to their *Luſts*, and that I do it *plainly* and *confidently.* Now any one that reads this would be apt to think that I had Directly, Formally, and Expreſly Charged them with theſe things: But do I do ſo? He knows that I do not; and I appeal to my Words, or to any indifferent Conſiderer of them, whether I do or no, and withal whether he has not done unfairly by me, by thus odiouſly repreſenting

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ing me, though the Charge it ſelf, as to the Matter and Subſtance of it, had been never ſo true.

But neither Secondly is it true. 'Tis not true in the firſt place that I charge the Men with *Inſincerity*. Had I ſaid that they were Conſcious to themſelves that this was not the Senſe, and yet would exhibit it as the Senſe againſt the Perſwaſion of their Judgments and the Light of their Minds, this indeed would be to tax them with Inſincerity. But do I ſay ſo? I do not ſay that upon the whole they were ſenſible that this was not the meaning of the Text; on the contrary, I ſuppoſe them, all things conſider'd, to be forc'd to take up with it as low as it was, for want of a due foundation for a higher; as would be ſeen if he had quoted me throughout. All that I ſay is, that they could not but be ſenſible that herein they did not riſe up to the *Letter*. But by his good leave, 'tis one thing to be ſenſible that ſuch a Senſe falls ſhort of the Letter, and another to be ſenſible that it is not the true Senſe, unleſs he will ſay that never any Man thought that a *True* Senſe, which at the ſame time he knew not to be the *Literal* Senſe of a Text. Which he muſt, and does by conſequence ſay, when he makes me Charge the Vulgar Expoſitors with Inſincerity, which fixes that very Imputation of Inſincerity upon all the *Proteſtant Interpreters* againſt the *Papiſts*, which he ſuppoſes me to lay upon thoſe of our *own Church*. And now he has made a fine piece of work on't. But where then is the pretended Inſincerity? I know of none, nor do I Charge any Man, or Body of Men, with any ſuch thing, though whether there be not ſome body in the World that I might now Charge with it, I leave him to conſider.

Then neither ſecondly do I Charge them with *Love* to their *Luſts*, at leaſt not as he repreſents it. For firſt, his Words imply as if I Charg'd it upon them in particular, whereas I ſpeak of Men in general, not excluding my ſelf, ſaying, *Were it not a matter of Pra-*

ctice wherein our Paſſions and Intereſts are concern'd. Again ſecondly, He ſays *Love* to their Luſts, whereas I ſay only *Luſts.* But now Luſts and Love to their Luſts are two diſtinct things; the former importing only the Natural Corruption of Human Nature, that propenſion that is in us to ſenſible Good, which is the ſame with Original Sin, and the latter the free Adheſion and voluntary Obſequiouſneſs of the Will to that Corruption, which is the ſame with Actual Sin. And how does he wrong me then when he imputes this Latter to me, whereas tis plain that I ſpeak only of the Former. Any one that hears him ſay, that I Charge ſuch Men with Love to their Luſts, would by the Natural import of the Words (eſpecially when joyn'd with the dreadful Alarm that follows upon them) be led to think that I had Charged them, and them in particular, with a wilful Adheſion to, and Complyance with their Luſts, whereas I ſpeak only of that general depravation of Human Nature, that Corrupt *Adam* which is in every Man, and which indiſpoſes Men for the reception of ſuch Truths as croſs and oppoſe that Natural Bias, which I make to be the great diſadvantage of *Moral* Truths, in compariſon of thoſe which are *Phyſical* and *Mathematical*, *&c.* This is the Drift of my Meaning, as may appear by the whole Scope of the Place referr'd to, than which I think nothing could be more innocent or inoffenſive in it ſelf, how choquant or diſtaſtful ſoever it may appear as our Reverend Author has been pleaſed to dreſs it up, and repreſent it; with what deſign I will not aſſume to judge, but I am ſure with no great Prudence, ſince he cannot but know, as well as the reſt of the World, how well affected I am to the *Engliſh Clergy*, and that I need not him, nor any other Reconciler to make me think better or more honourably of them than I do. But as the moſt ſerious things may be Burleſqu'd, ſo the moſt innocent things may be render'd offenſive and diſobliging, either by a falſe

or

or an untoward Repreſentation of them. And after he has thus miſuſed me, then to beat up for Voluntiers, and to endeavour to animate and ſtir up the whole Clergy againſt me as a Common Enemy, who mean no harm to any Body—— But I will ſay no more, than that by it he has utterly forfeited all the Thanks which perhaps he might otherwiſe pretend due to him for his kind Intentions and Endeavours.

I confeſs however that I did not expect to be ſo publickly aſſaulted by a Neighbour and a Friend, who methinks might with greater *Decorum* have left ſo ungrateful a Work to another hand, eſpecially at this time of Day, when we have no need of quarrelling among our ſelves for want of Adverſaries to try our Skill upon. But it ſeems, contrary to the Proverb, Neceſſity has now *too much Law*, and Neighbourhood, Friendſhip, Peace, *Decorum*, and every thing muſt be ſacrificed to that which is *better* than Sacrifice. But to the Point.

In order to which be it premiſed, that in all Perſonal Diſputation or Controverſie an Objection carries in it this Addition to the Nature of an Argument in general, that 'tis an Argument againſt ſomething before laid down or maintain d by the Party oppoſed. So that an Objection is an Argument, and ſomething more, and conſequently there goes more to make an Objection good, than to make an Argument good. For to make an Argument good, 'tis ſufficient that it be True as to Matter and Form; but to make an Objection good, it muſt not only be a *Truth*, but a *Contradictory* Truth. So that though a good Objection be alſo a good Argument (becauſe Objection includes Argument in it) yet a good Argument is not always a good Objection, and that becauſe an Objection implies ſomething more than bare Argument as ſuch, as being not only an *Argument*, but a *Contradictory* Argument.

And therefore though there be but one general way whereby an Argument may be Faulty, *viz.* by reaſon

of the *Untruth* of it, either as to Matter or Form, yet an Objection may be Faulty two ways, either for want of *Truth*, or for want of *Contradiction*; that is, it may be Faulty either ſimply as an Argument, or as an Objection, or if you will, either as to the Argument part, or as to the Objection part of it. Either the Thing Objected is not True, or if it be True, yet it is not a Contradictory Truth, and ſo a bad *Objection*, though perhaps a good *Argument*.

Accordingly there are two general ways of dealing with an *Objection*, according as the deficiency of it is in one or other of theſe reſpects. If it be truly Contradictory, but not abſolutely true, as to the Matter or Form of it, then I have ſomething to *deny*, the Syllogiſm it ſelf if wrong in Form, or ſome Propoſition of it if wrong as to Matter, and that again either Major or Minor, or Conſequence according to the Matter of the Propoſitions, and the Form of the Syllogiſm.

But if the Objection be Abſolutely true both Materially and Formally, but not truly Contradictory, what is to be done then? Why in this Caſe B. *Sanderſon* ſays in his *Appendix de uſu Logicæ*, pag. 273. that the Concluſion is to be denied. There are Three Things, ſays he, that may be denied, the Concluſion, the Form, and the Propoſition The Concluſion if it be Forreign, the Form if Vitious, and the Propoſition if Falſe. And again ſays he, *Si Opponens aut in primo Syllogiſmo non Contradicat Theſi Reſpondentis, aut in reliquis non inferat propoſitionem ab eo proxime Negatam, Reſpondens habet negare Concluſionem.* But then he after explains what he Means by Denying, *viz.* by rejecting it as not to the purpoſe, or (which he ſays is all one) by admitting the whole Argument. In which Account tho' his meaning be right enough, if rightly underſtood, yet I think he has not expreſs'd himſelf with either his uſual, or with Sufficient Clearneſs. For as 'tis moſt Certain in the general that the Concluſion can never be denied if the Premiſes are allow'd to be True (becauſe the Concluſion is contain'd in the Premiſes) and therefore the Denial when any is neceſſary, properly falls upon one of the *Premiſes*, not upon the *Concluſion*, ſo 'tis alſo moſt certain that in the preſent Caſe there is no need of denying any thing, there being indeed nothing at all to be denied. And therefore this great (and otherwiſe very Logical) Writer did not do ſo well in uſing the word *Deny*, however Interpreted afterwards by *Rejecting*, in reference to the *Concluſion*, ſince Denying is always applied to the *Truth* of the Objection, and that as to the Matter, or as to the Form of it, in relation to the Former of which we ſay *Negatur Propoſitio*, and in relation to the Latter, *Negatur Syllogiſmus*. But now here the Objection is ſuppoſed to

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be Absolutely True both as to the Material and also as to the Formal part of it. And therefore 'tis most certain that here is nothing to be *Denied*, or that can be said with any Propriety to be so. And then again, whereas he says, *by Rejecting it as Impertinent, or (which is the same) by admitting the whole Argument*, I cannot think this neither to be a clear Account of the Matter. For Rejecting and Admitting are in themselves so far from being the same, that they are Formally Contrary, and Vertually Contradictory to each other, and are no otherwise to be reconciled than by the difference of Respects, which yet he has not here assign'd.

Let us see then whether this Matter may not be set in a little clearer Light. The Question is what is to be done when the Objection is Absolutely true, both Materially and Formally, but not truly Contradictory? To which it is answer'd in the first Place, Absolutely and without any qualification, that here is Nothing to be *Denied*, the Matter and Form of the Argument being supposed to be True. And as there is nothing that can justly be denied, because all is supposed to be true, so neither has the Respondent any Reason, Perswasive or Inducement to deny any thing, since though a Truth 'tis yet an uncontradictory one, and such as though admitted does not concern him, nor affect the Thesis he Maintains. What then is he to do? I answer Secondly, That he is e'n frankly to admit the whole. For what should he do else? He *cannot* deny it because it is *True*, and he *need* not deny it because 'tis also an *uncontradictory* Truth. He must then, and may safely grant it intirely. Not that the Admission is so intire Neither, but that it *Consequentially* implies a Rejection too, though in a different Respect. That is, he Admits it as a Truth, but then by doing so does by Consequence Reject it as an Impertinent unconcerning Truth, (since if it were to the purpose, and against him, he would not *Admit*, but *Deny* it) or if you will Admits it as an Argument, but Rejects it as an Objection, because not a Contradictory Argument, as every good Objection should be.

But then it may be further Consider'd (which is all that can be said in this Matter) that as in denying any part of an Argument, either as to Matter or Form, the Respondent may be sometimes Obliged to assign some Reason of his Denial (for otherwise there would be no End of Disputation, since one Fool may deny more than a Hundred Wise Men can prove) so likewise in this Second way of dealing with an Objection by admitting the Argument as True, but rejecting it as Impertinent, the Respondent may sometimes be concern'd to assign a

Reaſon of his Procedure, which is to be done only by Stating his own *Theſis*, and by ſhewing that the Concluſion of his Oppoſers Argument does not really Contradict it. This indeed is a ſhort Cut, but 'tis all that can or need be done in this Caſe; and when he has done this, he has done as much as his Oppoſer can juſtly demand, and though in this way of proceeding he has nothing of *Denying*, *Solving*, *Refuting* &c. he has yet anſwered his Objection as fully as ſuch an Objection is Capable of being Anſwer'd.

Now thus ſtands the Caſe between me and my late worthy Oppoſers, who have both of them (eſpecially the Second) taken a gread deal of Pains *not to contradict me*. They pretend to write againſt me, and ſeem not to doubt but that they have Confuted me, and yet do not ſo much as *attaque* me. Not attending ſufficiently to the Principles, nor to the Concluſion of the Diſcourſe they offer to oppoſe, nor duly conſidering the exact ſtate of the Queſtion, they miſapprehend my Meaning, and ſo ſuppoſing me to hold what indeed I do not, they run on upon a wrong Ground, very elaborately ſet themſelves to prove a Concluſion that is not Contradictory to mine, and ſo fight, not with me, but with a Shadow of their own. In ſhort, they both harp all along upon the ſame falſe String, and beſtow great Pains to prove a wrong Propoſition: Wrong I mean not *abſolutely* in it ſelf, but in *relation* to *me*, as not being truly Contradictory to what I maintain, and ſo are guilty of that Fallacy which in Logick is call'd *Ignoratio Elenchi*, as St. *James* would have been in relation to St. *Paul*, (ſuppoſing he had intended to contradict him) when he ſays that a Man is not juſtified by Faith only, he not taking Faith in the ſame Senſe, when he ſays a Man is *not* juſtified by Faith only, as St. *Paul* does when he ſays that he *is*, and ſo not truly Contradicting him, becauſe not denying the ſame thing that the other affirms, whereas all Contradiction ſhould be *ad Idem*. And therefore I look upon my ſelf to be no further concern'd with my preſent Adverſaries (if I may ſo call them) than only to grant them, without any more ado, the main body of their Argument, allowing it to be True, but at the ſame time rejecting it as an Uncontradictory, and therefore not Pertinent Truth. I ſay I have no more upon my hands than this, unleſs it be for their Satisfaction to give them ſome Account why I do thus, which may be done in a little room.

I remark then that the whole Argument of the preſent Controverſie is a mere *Equivoque* upon theſe two Terms, *Love* and *Good*, which my Adverſaries (I hope they will pardon me for giving them a wrong Title) are pleaſed to take in the moſt large and popular Senſe, and not according to that due ſtrictneſs wherein I do, and wherein they ſhould take them to contradict me.

me. Thus as to the term (*Good*) they uſe it according to the utmoſt Latitude, as it comprehends all that which any manner of way contributes to our good, miniſters to our conveniency, and is better for us to have than to be without. And taking (*Good*) in this large popular Senſe, they contend that the World is good, that the Creatures are good, that Meat is good, and Drink is good, *&c.* and for the truth of this appeal to *Experience*. And no doubt all this is true. But herein they do not Contradict me, who uſe the term (*Good*) in a ſtricter, and as I think more Philoſophical Senſe, meaning by it that which really and truly does us good, or is the efficient Cauſe of Pleaſure to us. In which Senſe it is that I deny the World, or any Creature in it, to be a Good to us, truly and properly ſpeaking, becauſe not efficient Cauſes of the leaſt degree of Happineſs or Good to us, wherein I am not at all contradicted by their ſaying that the Creatures are good in the other larger Senſe, eſpecially conſidering that at the ſame time that I deny them to be *Efficient Cauſes*, I allow them to be *Occaſions* of Good to us.

Then again as to the term (*Love*) this alſo they uſe in the large and popular Acceptation, as it extends even to the *willing the uſe of a thing*, as ſuppoſe of Fire when we are Cold, or Meat and Drink when we are Hungry and Thirſty, and the like. But now I uſe the term (*Love*) more ſtrictly, and it may be more Philoſophically, for the Souls uniting it ſelf to any thing as its true Good, Beatifick Object, or the Cauſe of its Good or Happineſs. And accordingly in this ſtrict and rigorous Senſe of Love I make God the only due Object of it, and deny that the World, or any Creature in it, is to be loved by us, and that becauſe God only, not the Creature, is our true Good, Beatifick Object, and Efficient Cauſe of all our Happineſs. Whereas they taking the word (*Love*) more largely and popularly, as it comprehends within its Latitude even the willing the uſe of a thing, contend that God is not the only Object of our Love, but that the Creature may alſo be loved by us. Wherein indeed they ſay true, but do not Contradict me, eſpecially conſidering that at the ſame time that I deny that the Creatures are to be loved *as* our Good, I allow that they may be ſought and uſed *for* our Good.

Serm. *Of the Love of God.* Pag. 74.

And indeed ſetting aſide the Paſſage laſt quoted, which fully expreſſes my meaning, and ſeveral others which I might quote both from the Diſcourſe it ſelf, and the Letters which Comment upon it, to the like purpoſe, the very Principles I go upon, my way of arguing upon thoſe Principles, and the whole Current of the Diſcourſes themſelves do all ſo jointly combine to determine

termine my Meaning, that a Man who is awake when he reads them, might juſtly wonder how my Adverſaries could miſs it ſo widely, or ſuppoſe me to mean ſo abſurdly as they do. Nay, the very Nature of the Thing ſpeaks it ſelf. For ſuppoſing I had not laid in any Cautions againſt ſuch a Conſtruction, nor had dropt one word whereby my Meaning might have been explain'd, yet if they will but allow me to have Common Senſe (which their very Writing againſt me ſuppoſes me to have) how could they imagine that my words were intended in ſuch a Meaning as by their oppoſition of it they put upon me!

As firſt of all for the World's being a *Good*, can theſe Men imagine that I ever meant to deny the Creatures to be good in the lax and popular ſenſe of the Word, meaning, that they contribute ſome way or other to our good, and ſerve to the Neceſſity and Conveniency of Life, ſo that it is better to have them than to be without them? Or do they in good earneſt think that I would ſcruple in the ordinary way of ſpeaking, to call the Furniture of my Houſe, or the Books of my Study, my *Goods*, eſpecially ſince the late augmentation it has received by their two Learned Diſcourſes? There is indeed a Senſe wherein I do not, cannot allow them to be my *Goods*, but ſure not in the Senſe that is pretended.

And then again as to *not loving* the *Creatures*, can any Body imagine that 'twas ever my intent to deny the lawfulneſs of loving them in the lax and popular ſenſe, as that ſignifies the willing the uſe of them, or the deſiring to have them, or ſerve our ſelves of them for our preſent Accommodation and Conveniency while we are here? Or that I would ſcruple to conform to the common way of ſpeaking, by ſaying, that I deſire Meat when I am Hungry, or Drink when I am Thirſty, or Cloaths when I want them to keep me warm, or Phyſick when I have occaſion for it for my Health: Or that I would make any doubt to ſay, I love a Pen that writes well, or a Knife that cuts well, or a Horſe that goes eaſie, or an Adverſary that reaſons cloſely and to the purpoſe. There is indeed a Senſe wherein I cannot allow the Love of theſe things, but ſure not in that popular Senſe which is pleaded for, which as my Diſcourſes do not condemn, ſo I can ſafely ſay it was never in my Thoughts to deny.

To what purpoſe then does Dr. *Who*--- lay himſelf out ſo profuſedly to prove that the Creatures are good, quoting that Text for it, *P.* 8. that every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be refuſed, if it be received with Thanksgiving, for it is ſanctified by the Word and Prayer. Upon which he gravely Comments, *by the Word giving us Authority to eat of every Herb, and every living Creature*, quoting for it *Gen.* 9. 3. *And by Prayer, asking theſe good Creatures of him who is the giver of every good thing.* From whence he very ſolemnly draws two Weighty (I

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do not ſay *Heavy*) Inferences: Firſt, *That every Creature of God is good, i. e. good for Food to be received by us,* (I fancy 'twas about Dinner-time when he wrote this, and he thought he was ſaying Grace) *and therefore for our Food and conſequently for our good. And why elſe is it to be received with Thanksgiving, for what we are obliged to thank him for is ſure his Bleſſing, and our good.* Secondly, *That every Creature which is thus good for us muſt be deſired of God, it being ſanctified or fitted for our uſe by interceſſion to God for the enjoyment of it. Ibid.* To what purpoſe again does he tell us that Temporal things are good becauſe God promiſes them as the Reward of our Obedience, and that Rubies are good, p. 10. becauſe Wiſdom is better than Rubies, *Prov.* 8. 11. *p.* 11. And that Life, Plenty, and the Fruits of the Earth, Kine, Sheep, are good things, becauſe in certain Caſes God threatens to deprive Men of them. *Ibid.* And that Temporal Enjoyments are good things becauſe Mens Iniquities are ſaid to with hold good things from them. *p.* 12. And becauſe they are God's Bleſſings, and his Gifts, and are alſo call'd the good of a Man's Labour, *Ibid. Eccleſ.* 3. 13. And becauſe in the Story of *Lot* we have twice mention of his Goods; and in that of *Jacob*, that he carried away all his Goods. And becauſe St. *Luke* ſays, of him that taketh away thy Goods ask them not again. And becauſe the Rich Man is introduced, ſaying, There will I beſtow all my Fruits and my Goods. As alſo *Abraham* ſaying to *Dives*, Son remember that thou in thy Life-time receiveds't thy good things. As alſo *Zacheus* ſaying, Half of my Goods I give to the Poor. And ſays St. *Paul*, Tho' I give all my Goods to the Poor, and have not Charity---And he Commends the believing *Jews* for taking joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods. And then comes in the Wiſe Man alſo frequently informing us that it is the good of Man to Eat and Drink, and make his Soul Enjoy the good of all his Labour. *p.* 13. Well, here are a great many *good* things reckon'd up, and yet I can tell him of a very good thing (though not always well uſed) that he has left out, and that is a good *Concordance*, which I find has done him good Service.

To what purpoſe again is he ſo free of his Pains and of his Readers Patience in proving ſo largely (in Senſe as well as Compaſs) that the Creatures may be lov'd, that we may deſire our daily Bread, *p.* 5. that we may move towards our Meat when we are Hungry, and Drink when Thirſty, *p.* 14. and that we may rejoice in theſe things, and that the *Jews* were Commanded to rejoice in their Feaſts, *p.* 7. telling us withal that the Contrary Doctrine (as he will have it, though I know of no ſuch) is contrary to our Prayers for daily Bread, to God's Promiſes of Temporal good things, and his Threats of Temporal Evils, to the repreſentation of them as God's Gifts and Bleſſings, and our good

Things,

Things, *p.* 8. To God's Command to Rejoice in them, *p.* 15. To the Induſtry required by God to procure theſe things, and his Bleſſing promiſed to that Induſtry, *p.* 21. And that 'tis inconſiſtent with our Obligation to pray for Temporal Bleſſings, and with the Prayers of our own and Antient Liturgies, With the Praiſes due to God for Temporal Bleſſings, and with the Thanksgivings for them, uſed in our Liturgy, *p.* 22. That it tends to depretiate the Divine Gifts, to teach Men to ſlight God's Promiſes (he might as well have ſaid to ſtand upon their Heads) and Contemn his Threats, *p.* 24. to deſtroy all Induſtry in our Calling, and that it lays the vileſt Imputation upon the Diſpenſations of God's Providence towards us, *p.* 25. To what purpoſe again does he Appeal to *Solomon*'s Prayer at the Dedication, imploring Temporal Mercies, and asking Deliverance from the Peſtilence, Famine, Mildew, Blaſting, Locuſt, Drought, Exile, *p.* 21. And to Dr. *Comber* about the Antient Liturgies, Praying for Temperate Air, Gentle Showers, Refreſhing Dews, and Plenty of all Fruits; and to our Liturgy, Praying that God would give and preſerve to our Uſe the Kindly Fruits of the Earth---. And that the King may ſtudy to preſerve his People in Wealth, Peace, and Godlineſs; with a long Story about the Land of *Canaan* flowing with Milk and Honey, *p.* 72. and tedious Quotations out of *Deuteronomy*, *Exodus*, and *Leviticus*, about being bleſs'd in the City, and bleſs'd in the Field, in the Basket, and in the Store, *&c.* I ſay to what manner of purpoſe is all this, and abundance more that I might Muſter up together of the ſame importance, but that I am weary of Repeating, what once ſaid is too much. For 'tis viſible to the Eye that can ſee any thing, that all this is quite off from the Point, vaſtly *Wide* of the Mark (whoever 'twas that *ſhew'd* him his *Ground*) and a pure *Ignoratio Elenchi*, ſuch as Learned Men uſe to be guilty of, that won't Think. Of which we have a late and freſh Inſtance in the very Noiſy Controverſy between F. *Malebranche* and M. *Arnauld*, Dr. of the *Sorbonne*, who with great Zeal and Earneſtneſs write Volum after Volum againſt the Other, and yet very ſeldom, if ever, Oppoſed his true Meaning.

Suppoſe I ſhould ſay after St. *Auſtin*, that the World is not to be *Enjoy'd*, taking the word (*Enjoy*) as he does, ſtrictly, as 'tis oppoſed to, and diſtinguiſh'd from *Uſing*, and a Zealous and Over-Orthodox Adverſary thinking to Contradict me, ſhould with great Paſſion Contend that we *may* enjoy the World, uſing the Term (*Enjoy*) in the large Popular Senſe, as it ſignifies the Having, Poſſeſſing, or uſing of a thing, and ſhould quote Scripture for it, *who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*, and ſhould alſo pretend that the Contrary is againſt the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, who Prays in her Liturgy, *That it may pleaſe thee to give and preſerve to our uſe the Kindly Fruits of the Earth*,

Earth, ſo as in due time we may enjoy them, would not this be mere Stuff, wretched Trifling, quite beſide the Matter, a perfect *Ignoratio Elenchi*, and as much to the Purpoſe as if he had ſaid juſt Nothing?

Now this is the very Caſe in hand. Dr. *Wh.* has taken a great deal of pains to prove that we may deſire to have Fire when we are Cold, Meat when we are Hungry, Drink when we are Thirſty, and other Accommodations of Life as we want them. And he has proved theſe things very Learnedly, and like a Sound Orthodox Divine. But I think he might have ſpared his Pains, for who oppoſes him in any of theſe things? I know of no Adverſary he has, or is like to have in any of theſe Momentous Points. For though I cannot allow the Loving of Creatures in the ſtrict and rigorous Senſe of the Word, meaning by it the Uniting our Souls to them as our True Goods or the Efficient Cauſes of our Happineſs (as not being able to Conceive that they can be ſo) yet 'tis plain enough that I allow the *Uſe* of them, and the Willing or Deſiring them for that Uſe, and therefore he might have ſpared, among other Impertinencies, that Abuſive Reflection, *p.* 5. *Now is it not ſtrange Doctrine to affirm as Certain, that we cannot truly love God if we deſire our daily Bread, and that we forſake God if we move towards Meat when hungry, or Drink when thirſty.* Strange Doctrine indeed, but whoſe 'tis I cannot at preſent recollect. This therefore I ſay might have been ſpared, as well as that Invidious Quotation from St. *Paul* who he ſays *Condemns thoſe Hereticks who taught Men* (as if I did ſo) *to abſtain from Meats, which God hath Created to be received with Thanksgiving*, &c. *p.* 8. 1 Tim. 4. 3. The Unkindneſs as well as Impertinence of which Inſinuation is Obvious enough both from the place it ſelf, where this is alſo call'd the Doctrine of Devils, and from his diſtinguiſhing the word (*Heretick*) by a different Character; and I need not aggravate it any further to ingage the Readers Notice, than by praying God to forgive him for it.

But to ſet him right in the Notion he pretends to oppoſe, but indeed does not underſtand, and ſo levels his Aim at another Mark, let him take this ſhort Account of it. 'Tis conſider'd here that we are Beings of a Compounded Nature, conſiſting of Body and Spirit, having our Place and Abode in a Material and Senſible World. 'Tis alſo ſuppoſed that neither the Body to which we are united, nor the Bodies which are without and about us, no part of the Material World can act upon our Spirits, which are ſubject to the Power of God only, whoſe Priviledge alone it is to act upon them. And that therefore we are not to unite our Souls to theſe external Objects, which cannot really and truly by way of Cauſal Efficiency act upon them, but to God, who both can and does. But yet however becauſe

Bodies

Bodies do make a real Impreſſion upon our Bodies, and by that (according to the Divine Eſtabliſhment) are alſo Occaſions of what is felt in our Souls, we may unite our Bodies to theſe external Objects, which tho' occaſional Cauſes with reſpect to our Souls, are yet real ones with reſpect to our Bodies, and therefore may be approached to and united with by our Bodily part, as the Natural Condition, Means, or Occaſion of that Pleaſure which God truly cauſes in our Spirits upon ſuch Impreſſions made in our Bodies: That is, in other words, we may Will the uſe of theſe things according to the Order of Nature, or rather the Law of its Author, but not unite our Souls to them, as not being our Beatifick Objects: or, as I otherwiſe expreſs it, ſeek or uſe them for our good, but not love them as our good; or, as in the Letters, approach them by a Movement of the Body, but not by a Movement of the Soul. Which Diſtinction is as clear as that of the Soul and Body it ſelf, and is not in the leaſt invalidated by what Dr. *Wh*-- has offered againſt it. For what tho' the Movements of the Body are not pure Mechanical Motions, but do alſo include a Movement of the Soul, (as he very truly obſerves, but not very pertinently objects, *p.* 122) yet 'tis to be conſider'd here what this Movement of the Soul is, or, what is its *Term*. And when we do ſo we ſhall find that all the Movement of the Soul here is only to will the Movement of the Body towards theſe things, and not that ſhe unites her ſelf to them, which comes to the ſame as that ſhe wills the uſe of them as *Occaſions*, but does not unite her ſelf to them as *Cauſes* of her Good, as was ſaid before. So that the Diſtinction remains firm and unſhaken.

In ſhort then, I allow the Loving of Creatures, as that ſignifies at large *the willing the uſe of them*, but I deny the Loving of Creatures, more ſtrictly ſpeaking, as meaning by it the uniting our Souls to them as our true Goods, or Beatifick Objects. Which will reſolve at laſt into that Maxim of St. *Auſtin*, *Utendum eſt hoc Mundo, non fruendum*, that the World is to be uſed not enjoy'd, only with a better Foundation for it than he has aſſign'd, *viz.* becauſe the Creatures are only Occaſions, not the true Cauſes of all that Good and Happineſs which accrues to us in the uſe of them. A Principle which I have elſewhere proved at large, and which my Learned Adverſaries have not thought fit (no doubt with due Prudence and Caution) ſo much as to meddle with, much leſs to Confute, tho' one of them thinks it might be done by ſome, if they would be at the Pains, and thought it worth their while. Now for my part I think it very well worth their *Pains* and their *while* too, and that ſo much, that I cannot but wonder that Men ſhould pretend to Confute a Moral Diſcourſe built upon

1 *Diſc. p.* 78.

upon Philoſophick Principles, and yet ſhould let the Foundation alone upon which it reſts, and more yet, that one of my Adverſaries ſhould in the Title Page of his Book (the only place where ſome Authors Confute thoſe they write againſt) pretend to anſwer all the Arguments, &c. and yet not meddle with the Philoſophical, which is the chief part of the Diſcourſe. But 'tis *New* Philoſophy, and that he does not care to trouble his Head with, but likes the Company of his Syſtematical Divines better, whoſe *Appretiative*, *Comparative* and *Intenſive*, (whatever my Thoughts may be of them in other reſpects) I no more *envy* him than he does me the *French Poets* and *Divines*.

But though our Learned Author thus ſtarts and boggles at New *Philoſophy*, yet he has the Courage to venture boldly and hardily upon New *Logick*, whereof he has given us a very pregnant Inſtance, and ſuch as is not to be parallel'd in the whole *Art of Thinking*. *Had Mr.* N. p. 96. ſays he, *when he ſaid there are but two ſorts of Love, that of Deſire and Benevolence, conſider'd that this Love of Deſire may be branched into Religious and Natural Deſires, Deſire of things Spiritual and Temporal, of things good for the Body and for the Soul, of things to be uſed here, and to be enjoyed here and hereafter, of things as neceſſary for our being and our well-being, of things to be deſired for their own and for Gods ſake, he would have diſcerned as great a difference betwixt one Love of Deſire and another, as betwixt Love of Deſire and of Benevolence.* As much as to ſay, had Mr. *N.* when he ſaid there were but two ſorts of Lines, Strait and Crooked, conſider that Crooked might be branched into a *Circle*, an *Ellipſis*, a *Parabola*, &c. he would have diſcern'd as great a difference between this Crooked and that Crooked, as between Crooked and Strait. Well ſaid Logician: What do things that differe *genere*, the Co-ordinate Members of a Diviſion, differ no more than things that differ only *Specie*? Do a Strait Line and a Crooked Line differ no more than a *Circle* and an *Ellipſis*? This 'tis to think *freely*, and to leave the Company of the *Syſtematical* Men. Not that I would inſinuate hereby that our Author does not underſtand Logick. On the contrary, I verily believe he does. But as the Beſt Men have their Failings, ſo the Wiſeſt have their Overſights and Blunders. And all the uſe I would make of this is only to adviſe him not to be too ſecure of his Underſtanding, which by this he may ſee is lyable to Confuſion and Miſtake as well as other Mens, and to look better to his hits the next time.

But to return, having thus ſtated and explained my Senſe, I leave it to the Rational part of the World to conſider whether my Learned Adverſaries have Confuted me, or ſo much as oppoſed me or no. In the mean time, I ſhall take the liberty to conclude that they have not, and accordingly ſhall not think my

ſelf

ſelf any further concern'd with them at preſent, than to grant them the main Concluſion they contend for, as being alien from the Buſineſs, and utterly beſide the Point in Queſtion. I was inclining once to have made ſome Remarks upon the particular Arguments, together with other incidental Paſſages that run through the Bulk of their Diſcourſes, but a Kind and Ingenious Hand has ſaved me that Pains in relation to Mr. *L*--- and as to the other, I conſider that there needs only a particular Application of that general Ground I have laid, which may ſerve as a Key to unlock his Difficulties and Objections, which run upon a miſtaken Senſe of my Meaning, and Light with all their Weight (whenever they have any) upon a Propoſition that is not mine. And indeed I think I have taken the only proper Method to anſwer a Book that is written as his is. For when the whole runs upon a falſe Ground, to have taken him Piecemeals, Paragraph by Paragraph, and to have conſider'd every ſingle Objection diſtinctly, by ſhewing that ſuch a thing is true in this Senſe, which is not to the purpoſe, but not true in that Senſe which only is ſo, would have been a thing ſomewhat tedious and Troubleſome to me (who have neither *Time* nor *Health* to ſpare) and not very delightſome to my Reader, who alſo need not find the want of it, if taking the general Ground I have laid along with him, he makes a particular Application of it as he goes. Upon which Conſideration I ſhall concern my ſelf no further at this time: And let not any ſo far prejudge my Anſwer as to think it leſs Juſt and Perfect becauſe ſo ſhort; for as ſhort as it is, 'twill be found as long as the Objection, and if I do not anſwer more largely, 'tis becauſe my Adverſaries have not oppoſed me Pertinently; which is alſo the Reaſon why I did not Reply to Dr. *Wh--by*'s Private Papers. A Fencer that ſees his Adverſaries Paſs very wide of him, and running quite beſide him need not be very ſollicitous of his Defence, nor uſe a great deal of Guard, but when he finds him to ſtrike directly at him he is concern'd to ward off the blow as well as he can. And ſo ſhall I, and doubt not but by God's Aſſiſtance to be able to do it. And they may begin the Experiment aſſoon as they pleaſe.

In the mean time may the good Spirit of God ſhine forth upon all our Minds with his Heavenly Light, and aſſiſt our weak Underſtandings in the Study and Contemplation of all that Truth which it concerns us to know, and alſo by his Divine Grace ſo diſpoſe our Wills to all Charity and Brotherly Love, that whether we find and conſent in the Truth or no, we may yet continue well-affected to each other, and may ſtudy to preſerve the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteouſneſs of Life. Which Things I value more highly, and am, I hope, more heartily concern'd for than for any *Hypotheſis* in the World. 17 JY 60 *FINIS.* J. N.